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The Shape of Things

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THE ROOSEVELT SWEEP WAS NOT ONLY A Democratic triumph. This is shown by the impressive victories obtained by non-Democratic progressives in all sections of the country. In Nebraska, Senator Norris, running as an independent, has beaten both his Democratic and his Republican opponent. In Idaho, Senator Borah has emerged as victor from one of the bitterest battles of his career. In Minnesota, as we go to press, Congressman Lundeen, Farmer-Labor, is leading by a small margin in the race for the Senate. Wisconsin has sent at least six members of the La Follette Progressive Party to Congress, and has reelected Philip La Follette Governor. Despite the overwhelming Roosevelt sweep in Massachusetts, the notorious Curley has been defeated for the Senate. The one important exception to the general liberal trend was in New York, where Congressman Marcantonio lost to his Democratic opponent by a small margin. In Texas, Maury Maverick, one of the few outstanding progressive Democrats in the House, pulled through in a surprisingly close contest. Kopplemann, foe of the arms manufacturers, won in Connecticut. Less encouraging was the minor-party vote. Although returns are as yet fragmentary, it is apparent that Norman Thomas is running far behind his 1932 vote. New York City gave Thomas approximately 40,000 as compared with 122,000 four years ago. The Communists, on the other hand—despite their alleged support of Roosevelt—polled 32,000 as against 24,000 in 1932. In contrast to the admittedly disappointing showing of the Socialists, the approximately 300,000 votes cast for the new American Labor Party in New York State contain a promise that a new political alignment may be an indirect result of the Roosevelt landslide.

*

NOW THAT THE CAMPAIGN IS MERCIFULLY concluded, we feel as limp as an old mop left out in the rain. The poor old mop, indeed, has been rained on pretty steadily for four long months. Predictions, promises, accusations, threats, and straw votes have provided a tempest that has blurred our eyes and deafened our ears since June. In our exhausted state we were able to get up statistics only for the month of October. In that time, as reported in the New York *Times*, Mr. Landon made twenty-three speeches; Mr. Roosevelt made nineteen; Mr. Bleakley beat them all with twenty-nine. In addition there were thirteen by Knox, six by Hamilton, four by Al Smith, four by Father Coughlin, eighteen by

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Governor Lehman, five by Ickes, three each by Hull and Wallace, and four by the Postmaster General (when he works at it). Mr. Thomas was not reported very often, but it is safe to say he made about three a day. Mr. Browder, as reported in the *Times,* made one speech and three tries. Add some thirty-five to that for his total. This probably does not cover the field completely, but it gives you the idea. Other statistics, less reliable but equally important, are as follows: The New Deal was mentioned with enthusiasm 78,924 times; with sneers, 85,964. Twenty-seven miles of news film was used to show candidates in various attitudes of hand and hat waving. Just under 900,000 radio tubes blew up and burst. Forty-seven tons of torn-up paper was swept off the streets by 6,799 brooms working on double shift. The debauch is now over. The first plank on *The Nation's* platform for 1940 will be Shorter, Softer, and Sensibler Campaigns. Pardon us now. We have a date with a Beautyrest.

*

IN WHITEWASHING ITALY AND PORTUGAL of the charges of violating the neutrality pact, the London Non-Intervention Committee displayed a fine feel for politics and an utter contempt for facts. As Frank L. Kluckhorn, correspondent for the New York *Times,* pointed out on the following day, one does not need documentary proof that the fascist countries are aiding the rebels. The insurgents have already furnished all the evidence necessary. It is common knowledge that Franco and Mola did not have more than fifteen airplanes between them in the early days of the conflict. Recently the Corunna radio station boasted that 160 planes flew over Madrid in a single mass demonstration. The insurgents had no tanks in the early weeks of the conflict; a number of correspondents have recently described, with the permission of rebel censors, the effectiveness of new Italian whippet tanks. Ammunition for the special type of rifle used by the fascists has recently appeared on the front. None of these supplies could possibly have been produced in the part of Spain now held by the rebels. If the Non-Intervention Committee has no proof that they came through Portugal or Italy, that is in itself the most damning evidence that it is either hopelessly inefficient or blindly partisan.

*

AS WE GO TO PRESS, THE UNITED STATES IS landlocked by a strike of waterfront and sea-going workers which has virtually tied up American coast shipping and, in New York City, is being extended to transatlantic boats as well. Harry Bridges is the actual leader in San Francisco, and his name is the watchword at every other port. In California the objective of the strike is the holding of gains won in the 1934 walkout; the new demands which the employers have refused to accept, thus precipitating the strike, are the Maritime Federation's answer to the owners' open assertion that they intended to wipe out those gains. They represent a strategic assertion of union strength, not picayune obstacles to a settlement. The solidarity of the West Coast unions is another dramatic answer to the embattled shipowners. In New York the rank-and-file seamen have walked out in sympathy with their West Coast brothers. Beyond that, however, their objective is to take over control of the International Seamen's Union, which has been about as militant as a company union, and to set up an East Coast Maritime Federation to match the Pacific organization. Needless to say, the solidarity, strength, and discipline so far displayed by the unions are bound to inflame the minds of the giant red-baiters that have made California famous. We may expect red scares and atrocity stories and appeals to the government to end the Communist menace. What the government does in this extremely ticklish situation will provide an immediate index to its labor policy for the next four years. Meanwhile the union card is taking on new significance. In New York City no reporter is admitted at strike headquarters unless he can show that he is a member of the Newspaper Guild in good standing. This too is a reflection of the spirit in San Francisco, where, as one sailor put it, they look for the union label even on the hamburgers.

*

WHEN IT COMES TO ATTACKING THE REGIME in power the French rightist press could take the *Herald Tribune,* the New York *Sun,* and the Hearst papers, roll them all into one, start them off at the peak of their preelection frenzy, and still win in a walk. The big Paris papers, *Figaro,* the *Temps,* the *Jour,* and the *Action Française,* plus the conservative press all over the country, have subjected the Front Populaire government to a brutal campaign of invective which has not stopped at barefaced lying, libel, personal defamation, and even advocacy of violence. Moreover, since the advent of the Blum regime many fly-by-night journals have appeared to breathe poison on the government, their support, it is suspected, being drawn from the ample funds of the German Propaganda Ministry. Reform of the press was one of the pledges of the Blum program which had to wait until after the more pressing problems of labor legislation, nationalization of arms manufacture, reform of the Bank of France, and devaluation had been solved. But now the news has come that at the November session of the chambers Blum will present two measures, one to put an end to personal defamation by tightening the libel laws, and another requiring all papers to publish their sources of revenue. Also welcome is the news that Charles Maurras, leader-writer for the Royalist paper *Action Française,* who was indicted for incitement to murder at the time of the February riots of 1934, has been sent to prison for eleven months. His bloodthirsty articles calling for the death of 140 deputies who advocated sanctions against Italy led directly to the murderous attack on Blum's life last winter.

*

THE THUNDER OF MUSSOLINI'S ORATORY ON November 1 sounded around the world, and the reverberations have not yet died out. For Il Duce, ostensibly talking to the people assembled in front of the cathedral in his old home, Milan, in fact addressed fateful words

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to the governments of Europe. To Italy's weaker neighbors he spoke words of conciliation and promise. To Germany he offered his country's "vast sympathy" and full collaboration in the crusade against communism. To France he administered a rebuke, asserting that Italian friendship, chilled by sanctions, could hardly be restored until France recognized the conquest of Ethiopia. To England he shouted defiance, promising that if Italian interests in the Mediterranean were threatened, the people of Italy would "spring to their feet like one man ready for combat." For the operations of the League of Nations he reserved his deepest contempt. He dismissed as illusions the ideas of collective security and disarmament. He attacked sanctions as an "iniquitous siege against the people of Italy." He sneered at the League itself, declaring, "As far as we are concerned it can perish." Thus in a few words the fascist dictator swept aside the efforts of the great Western powers to establish peace on the status quo, and announced his own "armed peace"—the peace of the dissatisfied nations—to be achieved through increased armaments, the rectification of boundaries, and the war against communism. The line-up was made startlingly clear; and it must be admitted that determination, recklessness, and a fair number of just grievances are ranged on the side of the fascist bloc; while Britain and France are bogged by vacillations and an unwillingness to right, or even recognize, existing wrongs. Mussolini and Hitler are in a strategic position to nourish and harvest Europe's bumper crop of ill-will, and both have announced their intention to do so.

*

THE EASING OF TENSION BETWEEN CHINA and Japan can have only one explanation. Meeting a strong opposition in China which it hardly expected, Japan has backed down in its extreme demands rather than face the certainty of a Sino-Japanese war. When it is recalled that five Japanese were assassinated within a period of thirty days, and that Japan rushed gunboats and troops to China with every apparent intention of bringing severe pressure, its sudden soft-pedaling is all the more significant. In 1932 Japan did not hesitate to invade Shanghai when five Japanese priests were attacked by a Chinese mob. Although they met determined opposition from the Nineteenth Route Army, the forces under Chiang Kai-shek maintained a scrupulous "neutrality" which enabled Japan to pull through after weeks of bitter fighting. This time, however, the anti-Japanese feeling in China has become so aroused and articulate that Chiang can no longer remain on the sidelines, and Japan is seemingly wise enough to realize that it would have little to gain and much to lose in a protracted war.

*

OVERHEARD IN A PULLMAN SMOKING CAR the night before election: "If that man Roosevelt turns to the left in the next two years, the United States is going to be another Spain. I know thousands of men, including myself, who would be willing to take up arms against the government in order to stop him."

Will Roosevelt Go Left?

MR. ROOSEVELT'S smashing triumph has left the country dazed and happy. A Roosevelt victory had been expected by most of the political observers, but an electoral vote of more than 500 and a popular majority of about nine million are more than a victory. They are the crushing, unmistakable answer of the American rank and file to all the powers and principalities of reaction, now and to come. It is still hard to believe, but true. And each man in his own heart is happy that he stands massed with millions of his fellows in his desire for a decent living and a decent world.

Whose is the triumph? First of all, President Roosevelt's. In the face of one of the most rancorous campaigns in our history, the election is a tribute at once to his statesmanship and his showmanship. Despite returning prosperity, despite the political advantage of the work-relief rolls, another man in Mr. Roosevelt's place might easily have lost. He might have fallen prey to the opposing newspaper campaign, to the red scare and the atheist scare and the pay-envelope scare, to the huge campaign funds that were loosed against him. It was Mr. Roosevelt's tactics and timing, his talent for exposition, his sustained energy, his unruffled good humor—above all, the remarkable educational job he did in his whole campaign—that were such large factors in his victory. It is a triumph also for labor, which now emerges from this election with greater political prestige than it has ever before had in American history. And it is, finally, a triumph for the good sense of the common man and his capacity to remain unfooled.

Whose is the defeat? Not primarily Mr. Landon's. He was a little man caught in one of the blind alleys of history, forced to defend a losing cause with the rusty weapons of well-worn shibboleths like "Americanism" and "liberty." Two weeks from now he will be the most forgotten of all the forgotten men who have sought the Presidency and have lost. A special niche will have to be carved for him in the realm of American political oblivion. But the great defeat belongs to the men behind him and the interests they stand for. The rich are grieving in America today—the du Ponts, Henry Ford, Alfred E. Smith, the Liberty Leaguers, the big battalions of Wall Street, and their wives, who, organized in various "legions," bestirred themselves against Mr. Roosevelt with a concentrated hatred hitherto unknown. The men of ill-will are grieving —William Randolph Hearst, Paul Block, the Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, the Reverend Gerald Smith, and their ilk. The unwary are grieving—and in this category we must place our contemporary the *Literary Digest,* of hapless straw-vote fame. All these are grieving but their grief is of little importance. For the Landon minority was, like all propertied minorities, vociferous far beyond either its numbers or its place in the community life. And the Roosevelt majority was, like all majorities of the plain people, inarticulate except when it had a chance to greet its candidate and—most important—when it came to the polls.

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We take it that the election was not a triumph for the Democratic Party. Never since 1912 have the people so blithely played ducks and drakes with party lines. It was a triumph for three things: for a *man,* for a *point of view,* for a *direction.* The man is Mr. Roosevelt. The point of view is progressive and involves the assumption of increasing government responsibility. The direction is toward the left—that is, toward progress in social legislation, the protection of labor's rights, the curbing of big enterprise.

The American people have, in short, given Mr. Roosevelt a mandate. When they elected him by a landslide in 1932 their vote was mainly a protest against Mr. Hoover and his policies. When they reelected Mr. Roosevelt in 1936, by an even bigger landslide, they placed their stamp of approval not only upon him but upon his policies as well. They have shown that, for all the charges of radicalism hurled at Mr. Roosevelt during the campaign, they want those policies continued and extended. "We have only just begun to fight," repeated Mr. Roosevelt again and again in his Madison Square Garden speech. And the applause may be read in the election returns.

We should like to take Mr. Roosevelt at his word. We should like to believe that this fight of his—against the vested interests, against the holding-companies and the market riggers, against labor spies and company unions and slums—is really only in its initial stage and that the best is yet to come. But we must beware of being oversanguine. Mr. Roosevelt has had four years of the Presidency, and after four years the will to reform slackens unless it is deeply rooted and massively fortified. Mr. Roosevelt has reason to be a tired man. He is also a sensitive man. He does not like being disliked and being hounded as a traitor to his class. He is, most important of all, limited in his vision by his antecedents, his education, his class roots. Already there is talk of healing the scars of battle, and there will be more of the same talk for the next months. By all means let us have peace. But let us not fling away all the fruits of victory in our desire for the goodwill of all groups.

Will Mr. Roosevelt move left? The past years have taught us that questions like this are answered by three sets of factors. One is the nature of the economic situation and the necessities that flow from it. The second is the men in office and the philosophies they hold. The third is the strength and organization of the workers and their allies. The first two we now know. The third is in the making, and it is the most important of all. Let us assume that Mr. Roosevelt has the will and the energy and the fiber to carry out over the next four years the mandate the people have given him. What remains is that the workers and the farmers and the liberal middle-class groups shall build a framework within which this can be done.

THE second of Max Lerner's two articles on the American progressives has been crowded out of this issue by the pressure of other material. It will appear next week, and will deal with the position of the left groups in the light of the Roosevelt victory.

"Peace" and the C. I. O.

NOW that the election is over, that section of the American labor movement represented by the Committee for Industrial Organization, which has been devoting most of its energies to the cause of Mr. Roosevelt, may be expected to get down to its own business, the organization of steel and the other mass-production industries. At a meeting to be held November 7 in Pittsburgh the members of the C. I. O. and the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee will meet to take stock of the organizing campaign to date and formulate plans for the future. The members of the C. I. O. may also discuss the "peace proposal" put forward by Max Zaritsky of the United Hatters, Cap, and Millinery Workers; they will certainly devote a few words privately, and we hope publicly, to the manner in which this incident has been handled in the columns of the New York *Times.*

It was about a month ago that a writer on the *Times* reported sighting a dove of peace hovering over the two armies into which the American labor movement divided when the executive committee of the American Federation of Labor suspended ten of the unions represented in the Committee for Industrial Organization. It all began at a luncheon in honor of Abraham Cahan, editor of the Jewish *Daily Forward.* Matthew Woll, who with William Green is a reigning favorite of the Socialist Old Guard in New York City as well as a prominent member of the A. F. of L., said that labor must sink its differences in the face of its enemies. In reply, Max Zaritsky of the hatters' union, who is himself a member of the C. I. O., said that he too hoped for unity but saw a necessity for a "reshuffling of cards" in the federation. It was several days later, according to the dove fancier on the *Times,* whom we shall hereafter call Joseph Shaplen for short, that Mr. Zaritsky pulled the bird of peace out of a hat at the annual convention of the millinery union, clapped it firmly in a cage, and set out to bring A. F. of L. and C. I. O. together in a love feast. Since then Mr. Zaritsky, with the *Times* reporter at his heels, has been carrying the bird around to the tune of long-winded stories, exclusive to the *Times,* replete with quotations from Mr. Zaritsky and with rumors gathered in vague "labor circles" of peace, compromise, and dissension in the C. I. O. ranks.

The unfortunate part of it for the *Times* is that the dove of peace has not alighted yet; moreover, the suspicion is widespread that the dove is a decoy or that the *Times,* to shift our metaphor, is being used as a second-hand machine-shop for grinding Old Guard axes.

The facts are relatively simple. (1) At the annual convention of the hatters' union David Dubinsky made a speech in which he mentioned the "talk about peace" and stated that he too would be happy to see peace. He said, however, that the only basis for peace was a change in the A. F. of L. policy which would make it possible to organize the mass-production industries on a complete industrial basis. (2) The same convention passed a

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resolution. It was a long statement in which the executive council was denounced for its attitude toward the unions in the C. I. O., and the C. I. O. was given whole-hearted defense and support. To this statement was appended the "peace proposal," which contained two parts. It called upon the executive council "to permit the organizations affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization to be represented in the next convention"; it proposed that pending judgment by the convention the executive council name a subcommittee to meet with a like subcommittee of the C. I. O. "for the purpose of jointly exploring the possibilities of reconciling the existing differences and finding a formula by which the hopes of all workers for the unity of the labor movement and the organization of the workers in the mass-production industries may be realized." The first part of the proposal can have only one meaning: the hatters were asking the executive council to lift the suspension of the ten unions, since that alone would make it possible for them to participate in the Tampa convention this month.

The resolution of the hatters was transmitted to both Green and Lewis. The executive council agreed to the second of the two proposals. It appointed a subcommittee to meet with a committee from the C. I. O. but committed the council to nothing. It ignored the first and crucial recommendation. Mr. Lewis asked for clarification. Then the committee appointed by the A. F. of L., in an obvious bid for separate peace with individual unions which are known to value their A. F. of L. affiliation very highly, wrote a letter to Mr. Zaritsky saying it was willing to meet with any individuals or individuals representing unions affiliated with the C. I. O. To this splitting tactic Mr. Zaritsky replied that action must be collective.

On the basis of this clear-cut situation, however, the *Times's* New York labor expert built up an elaborate campaign of which the themes were (1) that the C. I. O. was crumbling and begging for peace, and (2) that John Lewis was delaying peace by not accepting terms which would mean the end of the C. I. O. and all it stands for! There is not space for a detailed case history, but a few examples of *Times* headlines in chronological order will indicate the outlines of the campaign:

A headline on October 5 reported "Peace Overtures Made to the A. F. of L. by C. I. O. Leaders. Dubinsky Says Group Is Ready to Dissolve if Organizing of Steel Workers Is Pressed. Green Hails the Offer." This story related, among other things, that Green's statement had been obtained by telephone from Washington.

On October 7 a Washington dispatch signed by Louis Stark gave rise to very different headlines: "Lewis Denies Move for Peace in A. F. of L. He and Green Differ on Dubinsky's Speech." In this story it was stated that Mr. Lewis looked upon Mr. Dubinsky's statement as a reiteration of the position of the C. I. O., and the dispatch contained the following sentences: "Disagreeing with Mr. Lewis, who quoted Mr. Dubinsky as insisting that the executive council should agree to organization of certain mass-production industries along industrial lines, Mr. Green said it was his understanding that Mr. Dubinsky would abandon the C. I. O. if the A. F. of L. supported an organization campaign in the steel industry. *This version, said Mr. Green, was conveyed to him on the telephone by the New York* Times *from New York* [our italics]."

Lewis quoted from a copy of Dubinsky's speech, and his version agreed with that given by Dubinsky himself to Edward Levinson in the New York *Post* on the day the *Times* "interpretation" appeared. But the campaign continued, and on October 9 it was reported that "Lewis Joins Peace Move." Lewis was in New York, and his "joining" consisted in a statement that he was ready to enter into negotiations with the executive council, provided the council, then in session, rescinded its suspensions. There followed long accounts of Mr. Zaritsky's movements and opinions, which reached a climax when he went to Washington to see Mr. Lewis. At this point two dispatches from Washington again introduced a note of reality. The first related that "Labor Peace Move Strikes New Snag. Lewis Demands Clarification of Council's Stand on Lifting Suspension." The second recorded a "Move to Split C. I. O. Begun by A. F. of L. New Committee as Its First Step Seeks to Pull Unions Away from Lewis Banner. Letter Sent to Zaritsky. But Hatters Head Insists on Collective Action." After that the New York stories were filled with reproaches of Mr. Lewis. "Lewis Unions Irked by Delay on Peace." "C. I. O. Head Refuses Quick Peace Move."

On October 25 the campaign against the C. I. O. and Mr. Lewis reached a climax in a story headed "C. I. O. Drive Fails, Steel Men Assert. Executives Say Only 4,000 Dues-Paying Members Have Been Signed Up So Far. Split Is Held Imminent. Peace Overtures of Dubinsky and Zaritsky Seen Spurred by Depletion of Funds." Mr. Shaplen has denied being the author of this vicious mélange, but he must take the credit for preparing the way for it, and the story contained all the familiar phrases, including the charge that the "peacemakers" were still "irked."

On October 27 the baiting of Mr. Lewis continued. Although he had arranged for a meeting of the C. I. O. immediately after the election and had come to New York to help carry the state for Roosevelt and not to talk peace, the headline ran "Lewis May Decide Course Here Today. His Reply to A. F. of L. Offer to Talk Peace With C. I. O. Awaited by Colleagues. Four to Meet at Rally. Insurgent Labor Chief's Delay Protested as Unions Fear Ban at Tampa Session."

The four met—and there was also a fifth in the person of Mr. Shaplen of the *Times*. It is reported that Mr. Lewis at that time complimented Mr. Shaplen on conducting "the greatest one-man propaganda campaign I've ever seen."

It is to be hoped that a formula can be found which will allow the industrial unionists a free hand in the mass-production industries without splitting the labor movement in two; but the October "peace" campaign in the *Times* was designed to obstruct unity, not to hasten it.

The *Times* is the most influential journal in America; its leads are followed by all other newspapers. Likewise the Committee for Industrial Organization and the job it has set out to accomplish—the organization of the unorganized—constitute the most important development in

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recent American history. When, therefore, a reporter on the New York *Times* is permitted to use its columns to distort and discredit the position of the C. I. O. it becomes a matter of vital public interest; and it becomes necessary to warn readers of the *Times* that articles on the C. I. O. emanating from New York City are not reliable.

How Real Is Recovery?

WHETHER by good luck or good management President Roosevelt went into the election campaign with economic conditions better, on the whole, than at any time since the end of 1929. The tide of recovery set in so relentlessly in the last few months that the campaign against the New Deal on economic grounds virtually collapsed, forcing the Republicans to fall back on vague and ineffective charges of "dictatorship" and "communism." The fact that the majority of traders in the stock market were strong Landon supporters did not prevent them, on the eve of the election, from bidding stocks to the highest level in more than five years. Many of the directors of the United States Steel Corporation must have been disturbed at the possible political effects of announcing, just a week before the polling, the largest earnings for a three-month period since 1930, together with a projected wage increase. But the facts of the business upturn are too glaring to have been concealed even if it were so desired, and what good business man does not put profits ahead of politics?

Even before the recent favorable announcements by the steel companies, the New York *Sun,* scarcely a pro-Administration paper, pointed out that the aggregate net earnings of the first 113 industrial companies had increased nearly 47 per cent in the third quarter of 1936 over their earnings in the same period a year ago, while the net profit of the same companies in the first nine months of 1936 was 52 per cent higher than in the corresponding months of 1935. The earnings of the steel companies will push up these various averages materially. Corporation outlay has also increased, though not as rapidly as earnings. Dividends declared in the first nine months of the year totaled $2,521,902,358 as compared with $2,030,929,120 in 1935—an increase of 24 per cent. The indices of business activity, employment, and pay rolls have lagged considerably behind those of profits, but have also shown considerable improvement. In August the Federal Reserve Board's index of industrial production reached 107, which was higher than the average for any year since the index was established with the exception of 1926, 1928, and 1929. The more current indices of the New York *Times* and the *Annalist* indicate that this rate was maintained through September and October. Aided by better business conditions, the revenues of the federal government surpassed a billion dollars in the first quarter of the present fiscal year, making the best first-quarter showing since the depression. Foreign trade, though still seriously depressed, has also shown encouraging gains and has returned to the normal export surplus.

Despite this impressive showing, hints of uncertainty about the future are beginning to find their way into the financial pages. An official of one of the larger automobile companies recently declared that his company wished to be clearer about prospects for 1937 before it committed itself to a further program of expansion. Doubts have been expressed regarding the ability of steel consumption to keep pace with the present rate of production. Retail sales are still running nearly one-third lower, in dollar value, than in 1929, although the price level is not more than 15 per cent below that of seven years ago. In spite of a considerable rise in employment, there are still at least ten million unemployed. The National Industrial Conference Board recently pointed out that while production was within 15 per cent of that of 1929, employment was 19 per cent under the pre-depression level. And this, of course, makes no allowance for the net gain due to the fact that the number of young men and women who have come into the labor market in recent years is much greater than the number withdrawn by death or retirement.

No one will deny that business activity is a direct function of profit-making. Business men will only spend money on expansion when earnings are good and increasing. But the extent to which earnings can rise depends, in the last analysis, on consumer buying power. The fact that a larger and larger proportion of the national income is going into dividends and profits means that the supply of funds which is available for investment is increasing more rapidly than the potential buying power. During the past three and a half years this has been more than offset by the great increase in farm income—partly the result of devaluation—and by government spending. Once started, the upward trend of the cycle has been accelerated by capital expenditures for new equipment and machinery, and even if government expenditures were stopped, the recovery process might extend well into the next year on its own momentum.

Sooner or later, however, the natural forces which have worked toward prosperity will burn themselves out. The normal length of the business cycle in the past has been seven to eight years. Seven years have already passed since the Wall Street débâcle of 1929. The first three and a half years of this period were years of steady economic deterioration; the succeeding three and a half years have witnessed steady improvement. While the upward movement of business normally takes somewhat longer than the decline, the time has arrived when prudent business executives will make a careful appraisal of the situation. Should government spending continue, there need be no early anxiety. Nor need we expect a recession if there is definite evidence—which so far is lacking—of a sharp credit expansion for business purposes. Such a development, once it got under way, would create new purchasing power and push the country well along the road to inflation. But with our millions of unemployed and with world trade at a low ebb, there is even less stability in the Roosevelt boom than in the New Era, concluded under Mr. Hoover in 1929. And more than ever before our national welfare is dependent on an intelligent understanding of economic affairs at Washington.

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Madrid Keeps Its Nerve

BY LOUIS FISCHER

By Cable from Madrid

AFTER breakfast today, when I began to write this dispatch, the rattle of the typewriter keys was mixed with the roar of fascist bombers, the ear-piercing whine of alarm sirens, and the strains of the International sung by new recruits marching down the Gran Via. Yesterday foreign airplanes honored us with three visits, Friday with four. The day consists of intervals between bombings. Nobody knows when they will come or where it is best to stay when they do. On Friday I inspected five places where the bombs hit. In Calle Nuncio a bomb killed five women standing in a milk queue and struck the pavement, making a three-inch dent. Then the bullets and shrapnel it contained sprayed the street and passed through an open doorway. A woman was sitting on the stoop with her two-months-old baby. The baby had fallen asleep; it never awoke. The mother's head was blown off; the child's body was crushed back into the mother's body. "And they call themselves Christians," commented a sixty-year-old woman when I climbed to her third-story room, which had just been opened to the sky by a bomb.

Indignation is the general reaction to these repeated bombings of peaceful civilians. "They've lost," my maid declared this morning. "That's why they are frantic." These air raids can have no military object. The government will not lose its nerve or leave the capital. It is a fight to the finish. Perhaps the rebels have lost their nerve. This week loyalist aviators bombed almost all of the important enemy airdromes and inflicted severe damage on planes and hangars without themselves suffering the slightest damage. Was it this startling development which made the fascists so wild with rage that they seek revenge on women and children, or are the Madrid bombings simply a sample of what fascists do when a real war starts? That Italian and German pilots should attack noncombatant Spaniards with bombs and machine-guns without provoking a protest so violent as to force democracies to intervene to protect Spain's progressive republic is a pretty fair gauge of the world's moral caliber these days.

About a hundred persons, the majority of them children, perished as a result of this week's bombings. Madrid answered with hundreds of men volunteering for military service and a multitude of women applying at the nurses' corps. (I stopped here and went out for lunch. While I ate roast lamb—Madrid is not starving; indeed, the food situation has improved recently—the sirens sounded again, the second time today. Guests at forty tables proceeded with their meals as though nothing had happened.)

The outcome of the war will not be determined by these cruelties. It will be decided on the various fronts. It does not take long to get to the front. I left my hotel in Madrid at 3:30 today and reached the second line at four. Here the Communist "Fifty" regiment, which is holding this sector, has fortified a convent by digging three semi-circular trenches around it. While I stood on a hill two mammoth bombers appeared over Parla, twenty-one kilometers from Madrid, and dropped bombs on it which sent smoke up from the mountains. At one o'clock this afternoon two government tanks supported by infantry retook the village of Parla, which the loyalists had evacuated several days ago. The enemy is bombarding it from the air, using cannon shells which burst in full view with mighty booms. Airplanes bomb, circle, then bomb again with complete impunity, for the government apparently has no fighting planes to drive away these giants. They fly at a height of 1,500 meters, where no shots from the earth can reach them. As I watched, fascinated by the violence and power of this murderous performance, three tri-motored Junkers zoomed overhead. I dashed for cover on the slope of the hill, but soon regained my senses. There is no protection from the destruction of these weapons. Fortunately they were not interested in this spot. Madrid was their goal.

The rebels may retake Parla tomorrow; the government may reoccupy Valdemoro tomorrow, and lose it the next day. Opposing forces on this as on all Madrid fronts seem more equal now than they did a week ago. Moreover, the morale and discipline of the loyalists have been noticeably stiffened by the presence of political commissars, by the better work of new staff officers who prefer the front line to the War Ministry, and by the appearance of fast tanks. The moment a tank goes into action soldiers follow it with enthusiastic cries.

Pushing the enemy back village by village, however, is a costly affair in time, materials, and men. Madrid talks of a flanking offensive to cut off the enemy around Madrid and to compel him precipitately to retreat. (In general, Madrid talks about everything. There are no secrets in this war. Amateur strategists in cafes are almost as numerous as fighters at the front.) The government's Foreign Legion, if it can be prepared soon enough, will probably constitute the spearhead of such a movement. This unit consists of Communists and Socialists from various European countries—no Soviet Russians—and much hope is reposed in it. Its friends expect to reinforce it in time with British, Irish, and American contingents. The Foreign Legion will be ably seconded by increasing numbers of Spanish battalions, which are quickly losing their timidity under fire. The same companies which I saw bolt a fortnight ago when a bomber hove into view, now disperse in orderly fashion, lie down, and reassemble when officers give the all-clear signal. At the front a Communist said to me, "See that white wall. We shot a Communist there this morning because he was sowing panic."

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Campaign Dirt

Washington, November 2

THE period of emotional let-down that follows a Presidential election is the time to consider the dirty and shameful tactics that were employed to bring about this or that candidate's defeat. Then and then only do they appear in all their truly hideous contours, and then and then only is there a chance that their employers and beneficiaries will be properly shamed by a review of them.

The Presidential campaign that will have ended before these words appear in print has been no dirtier than many of its predecessors, if comparisons are restricted to the kind of mud thrown. The difference, if any, has been in the mud-slingers; in the campaign of 1936 the catapults of obscenity were manned almost entirely by our Best People and Leading Citizens. Even in this respect the 1936 campaign deserves no marked distinction, for it has been generally true that the stratum of our society whose members are most certain that they comprise the gentry has always surpassed in personal vilification the ward-heelers it despises.

In compiling this space-limited *Schimpflexikon* of the 1936 campaign I shall confine myself to the less-publicized canards and pass over the various attempts, oral and printed, to prove the White House under Roosevelt merely an outpost of the Kremlin, and I shall not dwell on the contemptible frauds perpetrated in pay-envelope slips and posters concerning the Social Security Act, but pause only to point out that the ostensible elite of the nation took the lead in both attacks. For a different but quite obvious reason I shall pass over all the little leaflets attacking the private lives of the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, including especially the pamphlets dealing with Mr. Roosevelt's physical infirmities.

What remains that is printable divides itself into two categories—the anti-Semitic and the anti-Negro. Neither represents an innovation in Presidential campaigns in this country any more than does the line of attack that may be euphemistically described as the medicinal. But it is probable that the anti-Negro and anti-Semitic attacks—and especially the latter—have been used to a greater degree this year than ever before.

The anti-Negro attack, later vociferously exploited by anti-New Deal newspapers in the South, including the Charleston, South Carolina, *News-Courier,* first broke out into the open at the grass-roots convention at which Gene Talmadge pontificated—with members of the Southern Committee to Uphold the Constitution serving as celebrants, acolytes, and deacons—when insinuatingly captioned photographs of Mrs. Roosevelt in the company of Negroes were circulated. They continued to circulate throughout the Presidential campaign. And who financed the convention at which they received their initial distribution? Why, some of our leading Liberty Leaguers, including the du Ponts, who may have deplored the resultant publicity but seem never to have deplored publicly the use to which their money was put. Thomas F .Cadwalader, a Maryland gentleman and Liberty League leader in the Free State, when cornered by reporters, expressed regret that some of his money had been used to finance a convention utilizing so ugly a propaganda device, but saw no reason why he should resign from the S. C. U. C. or withhold further contributions.

A certain letter was distributed to Democratic women in many parts of the South. It is a long letter, addressed to "My Friends of the Southland," and says in part:

> Do you realize the activities of Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt in spreading Communism in your beloved Southland? They are deeply involved in the many Negro organizations such as: The Struggle for Negro Rights, the Scottsboro Case, THE ANGELO HERNDON PETITION COMMITTEE (all advocating equality with whites, even marriage) and Communistic Plans for a Negro Soviet South (The Bible Belt.) Mrs. Roosevelt's picture appears many times at their meetings, or receiving with them, also at the White House. See the Washington issue of "AFRO-AMERICAN" of April 21, 1935, headed "THE FIRST LADY HELPS THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE GET 600 NEW MEMBERS" (The N.A.A.C.P. is cooperating with the Communist Party Organizer.) Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, was the speaker February 26, 1936, at the National Urban League. Blacks and Whites were seated together, about 60% being Negroes . . ."

This letter was mailed from the Stevens Hotel, Chicago, and inclosed with it were a number of leaflets, including one prepared by "American Women Against Communism, Box 296, Grand Central Annex, New York," baring a plot to "carve out of the federal territory a NEGRO REPUBLIC." The letter itself was signed by Mrs. Lowell F. Hobart, an Ohioan and former president-general of the D. A. R.

Here is a fat manila envelope addressed to an official of a national organization, and it is not the first envelope of its kind or contents received during the campaign from the same source. The envelope says the sender is Henry B. Joy, Detroit, Michigan. Mr. Joy, whose wife is a former national officer of the D. A. R., is himself a leading Liberty Leaguer, a former president of the Packard Motor Car Company, and a member of the directorates of the United States Chamber of Commerce and the American Protective Tariff League. The envelope contains five documents, and the fattest among them is an anti-Semitic book-

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let widely used in the campaign. The remaining items in the envelope are (1) a flier put out by the "American Vigilant Intelligence Federation, Chicago," purporting to be a reprint of an article by Kalinin from the first page of the Moscow *Daily News,* showing pictures of Roosevelt, Kalinin, Bullitt, Troyanovski, and Litvinov under the caption "An Era of Fruitful Cooperation"; (2) another attempt to paint Roosevelt as Stalin's paid understudy put out as "Letter No. 34" by the New York State Economic Council; (3) a flier entitled "Kick the Money Spenders Out of the Temple"; and (4) a pamphlet issued by the American Indian Federation, Washington, entitled "Now Who's Un-American? An Exposé of Communism in the United States Government," consisting chiefly of an attack on the American Civil Liberties Union and Roger Baldwin, who is pictured as in cahoots with Roosevelt.

The *pièce de résistance* in the collection is the anti-Semitic booklet "Toward Armageddon," published by the Militant Christian Association, Charleston, South Carolina, and composed of editorials by "The Squire of Krum Elbow," which made their initial appearance in the Highland, New York, *Post,* owned by one of Mr. Roosevelt's neighbors. On the booklet's inside cover other pamphlets are advertised, including "The Jewish Question," offered by Sawyer, 601 Fox Building, Detroit; "Anglo-Saxon Israel," offered by Adam Rutherford, of the same Detroit address; Mrs. Dilling's "The Red Network"; and the output of the now notorious Edmondson Economic Service, New York. From the last-mentioned office have come many other anti-Semitic leaflets widely used in the campaign, including a list of "America's Jewish-Radical Masters," who, we are urged to believe, boss Roosevelt; the list runs to sixty-two names including, in addition to Baruch, Brandeis, Frankfurter, and Albert Einstein, the names of Newton D. Baker ("wife's name was 'Leopold' "); Cordell Hull ("wife's maiden name reported as 'Rosa Witz' "); Senator Wagner ("of Jew-controlled Tammany"); Marriner Eccles, a Mormon; Tom Corcoran, a Boston Irishman; Bill Bullitt, Philadelphia socialite; and A. A. Berle, Jr., son of a Congregational minister and Tufts College professor of Christian theology. The list of anti-Semitic literature used in the campaign against Roosevelt could be lengthened interminably. Any such list must include the *Revealer,* a *Christian News-Journal,* published at Wichita, Kansas, by the Reverend Gerald B. Winrod, D.D., and featuring on the first page of its October 15 issue "Roosevelt's Jewish Ancestry," illustrated by a genealogical chart that fails to bear out the article's contention that the President is a descendant of Rosenbergs, Rosenbaums, Rosenblums, Rosenvelts, and Rosenthals. Like the booklet "Toward Armageddon"—which talks of "ritual murders" and does more than hint that Roosevelt had Senators Cutting, Long, and Schall and Governor Ritchie murdered and that Al Smith has shunned the White House for fear of being poisoned there—all these anti-Semitic publications attempt to revive the old Protocols and Elders of Zion canard and show that "a formidable sect" controls the White House so long as Roosevelt is in residence there.

What the Steel Workers Face

BY ROSE M. STEIN

KENNETH KOCH worked for the Weirton Steel Company for fifteen years. During the 1933 unionization drive he was an active officer of the union and was one of the chief witnesses against the company in the famous Weirton Steel suit precipitated by the federal government under the NIRA. Much to his own surprise he was not fired for his activity. This August he was sent as a delegate from his district to a state Democratic convention, and there took an active part against the company stooges who had invaded the Democratic ranks to seek nomination for local offices. Kenneth Koch is young and energetic; he is well liked in the community, and his support of local candidates carries weight. His opposition to company candidates was the last straw and on his return from the convention he was fired. Within a week he was taken on as a paid organizer for the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee.

Plant management was annoyed. As long as Kennie was in the mill he exercised a certain amount of caution in order to hold his job. Now he was free to do his best as an organizer—his worst from the company's point of view. Something had to be done. But getting rid of Kennie was no easy matter. Twice within two weeks he was called on the telephone and told in plain unaccented English: "Mr. Koch, we want to warn you that we are going to wreck your car tonight." But Kennie knows the ways of Weirton. "They want me to shoot at them," he said, "but I won't." Both threats were carried out. The car was parked in front of the house. While Koch and a couple of his friends sat quietly on the dark porch, a yellow coupe known to belong to Weir's private police passed by, and one of its occupants hurled a brick that broke the windows of Kennie's car. Another brick was hurled at the house, striking the screen door. Koch had his car fixed and went on organizing.

One of the jobs of the local organizer is to distribute *Steel Labor,* official paper of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee. The first time Koch did it he was unmolested. Almost every worker who came along took one. Some of them were in cars and when they stopped they held up traffic. Company police watched from across the street but made no move. It was too good to last, and it was rumored that the next time something would happen to Kennie. As a precaution he asked the county sheriff to

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protect him, and the sheriff solemnly promised to do so. On September 11, at three in the afternoon, when the shifts change, Kennie and another organizer, Steve Barron, took their stand about a block from the strip-mill gate. Like Koch, Barron had two counts against him. He was an organizer and he was also running for constable on the Democratic ticket. After a quarter of an hour a man known to be a "spotter" came up and took a paper. He then walked to a car parked nearby. After a brief consultation five huskies got out of the car, and the six men moved toward the two organizers. Splitting their ranks, three of them passed behind the two men and three in front of them. Then one, standing directly in front of Koch, opened the paper between them and directed a blow which Koch was just quick enough to duck. As he dodged to the side, two others grabbed his feet, threw him to the pavement, and dragged him about twenty-five feet, kicking him while the leader of the gang croaked, "We'll send him to the hospital this time for sure." A crowd quickly gathered and Koch's three assailants disappeared. Meanwhile the other three had landed a few blows on Barron. He managed to remain on his feet, however, and dashed into a shoemaker's shop, where he grabbed a hammer. By the time he got back to the scene of battle all six had packed into their car and driven away. They merely drove around the block, however, and then came back to the "clock house," where the men punch their time cards.

Barron came off with a black eye and Koch with a bruised leg. There were so many witnesses that the assailants were easily identified. They were arrested and held for the grand jury. But the grand jury was made up of Weirton business men who could find no true bill against the slugging six, one of whom remarked when he heard the jury's decision, "Now we can do it again."

They did. On October 16, in front of the mill hospital, Koch was attacked by twelve men, identified as members of Weir's reorganized spy force and known as the "Hatchet Gang." This attack was in part the basis of the charge of terrorism by Ernest T. Weir brought before the La Follette committee by Philip Murray of the steel-organizing committee.

The union men have had another lesson in Weirton justice. During the campaign they showed their resentment by political independence. It was not safe for a man in Weir's own stronghold to show a sunflower in his lapel. He was not beaten up; his car was not wrecked. He was merely greeted with a chorus of boos so full of contempt that none had the courage to face it.

As the steel organization drive progresses, it becomes increasingly evident that one of the obstacles it must overcome is the sense of betrayal engendered by the failure of the American Federation of Labor to organize and support the half-million steel workers during 1933 and 1934. Section 7-a fanned into flame a long-smoldering revolt against the poverty and misery of the depression years; and the employers, taken by surprise, offered less resistance than at any time since 1892. Before they could collect their wits unionization was in full swing in the steel towns; steel workers were filled with a sense of freedom such as they had never known before and were flocking to the union. It didn't matter who the organizer was. He had only to call a meeting and the hall was filled. Every union gathering took on the air of a revival meeting, with converts rushing down the sawdust trail to get their membership cards. True, many did not pay dues or initiation fees. How could they? Work was scarce and wages were meager. But the spirit was there. Frequently lodges were formed without the knowledge of the union's international office, let alone its aid. By June, 1934, approximately 100,000 workers had signed applications to join the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers.

The mere signing of a card may not constitute bona fide membership or bring dues into the union treasury. It does represent the first important step—a loosening of the iron grip of the steel management. Unfortunately, leaders of the Amalgamated did not see it that way. They counted only dues-paying members. Locals which did not pay promptly were left to get along as best they could. In turn the locals lost interest in the international, and paid dues only for the number of members necessary to retain their charters. But some of the local lodges grew with amazing rapidity. In Weirton, for instance, where labor had never been organized, where union organizers had been convinced of the desirability of leaving town the moment they entered it, where even the 1919 drive had produced no results—the Weirton plant was the only one that worked full force throughout that strike—8,600 out of 10,000 workers joined the union in 1933. In a strike called Sep-

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tember 25 of that year the plant was shut down so tight that E. T. Weir himself could not enter without permission from the strike committee. Deputy sheriffs and police were let loose on the scene in full force, but the plant remained shut until the government concocted a settlement which became the first step in the well-known and long-drawn-out litigation. In the process of that litigation the union was so effectively crushed that when the present drive began the lodge did not even have the ten members necessary to keep the charter.

Considerable progress was made in many other localities. In Duquesne, at the Carnegie-Illinois Steel plant, 3,200 out of 4,000 employees signed up. In the whole Pittsburgh area, with the sole exception of Homestead, 50 per cent or more of the steel workers signed. The Youngstown and Gary districts also developed a large union membership. It was to be expected that a union which grew more in protest against misery and depression than because of any conscious understanding of the long-range purposes of organization should be subject to a high mortality rate. But new recruits were constantly added. The organization needed only guidance and clarification. These it did not get. The international officers were either afraid of a large rank-and-file union or too stupid to realize what was happening. When they did appear at meetings they rarely offered constructive advice but concentrated on red-baiting. Leadership was left exclusively in the hands of a few active and sincere rank-and-filers, who were nevertheless confused and inexperienced. They got along fairly well, however, until the companies began to apply the old pressures. Then the union began to lose ground. The entire industry was operating at less than half its capacity, which made possible discrimination and intimidation through the allocation of work. Union men were assigned harder jobs with lower pay or they were given only one or two days of work a week, while non-union men got full time. Then came outright dismissals. At first the companies hesitated to fire officers and acknowledged leaders, but that would clearly be the next step if the organization continued to lose strength.

For most of the rank-and-file leaders the American labor movement began with the passage of the NIRA. They had taken part in strikes, though they had never led one, and they knew it was labor's most effective weapon. Why not make use of it? Thus originated the threat of a steel strike in the summer of 1934. Fortunately the strike never came off. The international leaders sabotaged it, and the rank-and-file leaders had neither the resources nor the experience to carry it through. The companies, on the other hand, were prepared for a first-class war. The record of the Senate Munitions Committee has since disclosed that practically every steel company was an armed camp at the time. But while it was perhaps wise to call off the strike, it was negligence of the first order not to provide a substitute means for building the organization. William Green pleaded eloquently against the strike on two major premises: first, that the government would appoint a steel board "with teeth in it"; second, that the A. F. of L. would undertake to build a strong steel union. The Steel Board was appointed but it was toothless; its jurisdiction was questioned and its decisions ignored. Neither the federation nor the Amalgamated lifted a finger to build the organization or to maintain what organization already existed. The men who had joined were left high and dry. Some lost courage and quit. Those who persevered were dealt with by the companies in a fashion they will not soon forget. They were demoted, fired, evicted, had their mortgages foreclosed. By early 1936 the organization had been practically wiped out, the few surviving lodges driven underground. None of the fired men whose reinstatement was ordered by one or another of the labor boards was taken back. The rank-and-file leaders of 1933-34 were either given good jobs on condition that they would remain "sensible" or they were locked out permanently and forced to seek other means of making a livelihood. Only one survived in the movement and is now an organizer.

These experiences are fresh in the steel worker's mind. The present Amalgamated lodge in Homestead is called "The Spirit of 1892," in memory of the struggle of forty-four years ago. No D. A. R. ever took greater pride in her revolutionary forefathers than does a Homesteader in the father, grandfather, or uncle who took part in the 1892 strike, and the number of participants is increasing as rapidly as the number of those who came over in the Mayflower. But while courage is thus remembered and admired, the fear of reprisal cannot be ignored. It is too close to everyday existence. The public knows of the open warnings issued to steel workers through the press. Foremen, superintendents, and assistant superintendents repeatedly utter individual threats. For the last few months the steel

Drawings by Howard Cook

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industry has been operating at the highest rate since 1930. For the first time in six years these workers and their families are not confronted with stark poverty and starvation. To join the union openly now is to risk losing one's job and to face starvation again. Admittedly this fear is the greatest single obstacle to the present drive.

On the other hand a surprisingly large number of the workers realize that their position is equally precarious outside the union. The reason is the growth of mechanization. Continuous-process mills are springing up at an alarming rate. The United States Steel Corporation has budgeted $140,000,000 for new plants. The Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation recently borrowed $40,000,000 to finance new mills. The Bethlehem Steel Corporation has just opened a new $20,000,000 mill. The Weirton Steel Company already has a continuous-process tin mill. The new highly mechanized equipment is bound to throw many skilled and unskilled men out of employment. The unskilled worker is used to it, but the skilled worker is seriously alarmed.

In the present drive every precaution is being taken not to expose the worker to the eye of the stool pigeon or to the wrath of the employer. Those who sign applications become members of the Amalgamated and of the C. I. O., but no local lodges are formed and no record of membership is kept anywhere save in the central regional offices. Ordinarily, as soon as a lodge is formed, local members are elected officers and are obliged to hold business meetings for members only. Since such meetings must necessarily be held in the community, the boss, through his spies, readily obtains a record of members. Under the present arrangement only two kinds of meetings are held —large mass-meetings held in the open and really secret meetings attended by a chosen few in somebody's kitchen or in the woods at night.

With the exception of the employees in one or two small plants and the members of two independent unions, who joined in a body, there has been no wholesale recruiting in the fashion of 1933-34. But membership cards stream in from every important steel community. No announcement has been made of the number of members to date. When the S. W. O. C. finds that in its judgment enough steel workers have joined its forces to justify its claim to bargain for the entire industry, it will notify the Iron and Steel Institute. If that body refuses recognition, as it probably will, the next step will be decided upon. For the present there is neither talk nor expectation of a strike.

The experience of 1933 and 1934 had one lasting and important result—the strengthening of class consciousness. Save for the professional labor prostitutes who appear in the newsreels to plead the bosses' cause or serve in other ways as stool pigeons, the steel workers no longer trust their employers.

It is too soon to appraise the present drive in steel, but several facts stand out clearly enough. The C. I. O. is here to do the job which the federation should have done three years ago. It must do the job now, for not a single one of the unions which comprise it is really safe as long as the basic industries, and especially steel, remain unorganized.

Reaction Rises in France

BY M. E. RAVAGE

Paris, October 14

AFTER a hard summer hope is bracing the foes of the government to vigorous action. With the chambers in recess, the summer was a season of plans, maneuvers, and combinations; the saviors of the nation have worked hard—and it must be admitted not without some success—on all fronts, political, social, economic, financial, legal and extra-legal, and even, if certain dark rumors are to be believed, military. By the end of last month they were ready to ring up the curtain and give the country a preview of their labors. The country was duly impressed; one might even say startled. The people, who only six months ago had voted overwhelmingly for the left parties and for a left program, had no notion that the credit of the Front Populaire and the ministry had been so badly shaken by recent developments.

The oligarchy and its political friends are perhaps a little too hopeful. But there is no blinking the fact that grave conflicts have in the last few weeks been straining the left coalition almost to the breaking-point. Hardly less serious are the discords within the Radical Socialist Party. Faction-ridden in the best of times, the Radicals have since the elections of last spring found fresh points of friction in the decline of their party, for the first time in many years, to second rank. The moderates—the *Ere Nouvelle* and *République* groups, the Lavalians, and the like—hold the alliance with the Marxists responsible for that calamity, and urge that the party detach itself without delay and stage a comeback now before the right and the fascists can profit from the collapse of the Front Populaire. Chautemps seems to be heading this group—that is the meaning of his talk about new elections—in opposition to the Cot-Daladier clan.

But all the Radicals are profoundly disturbed over the plight of the middle classes, which with the peasant-proprietors form the bulk of their support. They are aware that until prosperity returns to France, all the laws and palliatives propounded by the government to save the petty bourgeoisie are doomed to be ineffective. And they know, too, that it is not the government but the government's foes that are keeping the country from settling down to work to make a new prosperity possible.

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If the strike of last spring was a spontaneous workers' movement for better wages and conditions, the new strike wave afflicting the country is deliberately provoked by the employers. This holds true of the textile strikes that broke out in the north three weeks ago, the recent waiters' strikes, and the hundred and one conflicts which keep the country seething at the present moment. The motive of the employers' associations is not merely economic—to evade the agreements they were obliged to sign last June. They are primarily political. By discharging active union men, by delaying ratification of the collective contracts, by withholding promised wage increases and even reducing wages, by permitting or encouraging rival Croix de Feu "unions," they drive the workers to frequent stoppages and renewed occupation of plants, and thereby arouse public opinion, cause dissension among the parties in the Front Populaire, and cast discredit upon the government as lacking the authority to keep order.

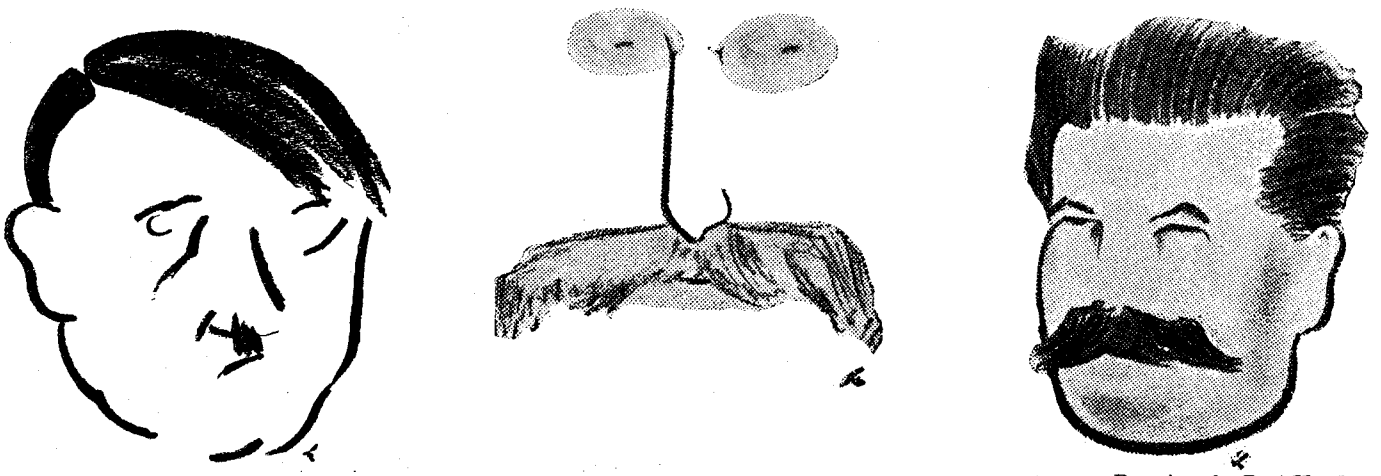
All this, seemingly, is part of the tactics elaborated by the opposition in the last few months. But it is only a fraction of the program. Another section is addressed to the consumer. Prices of all sorts of articles soar "to meet added labor costs." Many commodities are unobtainable "owing to occupied plant" or "because boatmen are on strike" or —since the beginning of October—"on account of devaluation." These stereotyped phrases seem to issue from a common source.

Then there is the renewed activity—under political-party labels—and the increased armament of the semi-military leagues, not merely the Croix de Feu but all the others, including the "Agrarians" of Count D'Halouin (alias Dorgires), who, after giving no sign of life for the better part of a year, some three weeks ago organized the truck growers' strike with the avowed purpose of "starving Paris." Unhappily the government cannot in this instance be absolved of blame. It neither effectively suppresses the leagues nor treats the "parties" under which they masquerade fairly. The irrepressible Colonel bluntly challenged the Minister of the Interior recently to do one or the other. Fair-minded Frenchmen who shudder at his very name conceded that "La Rocque was right."

Why are not the leagues suppressed? The satirical weekly *Canard Enchainé* suggests a solution to the mystery which is less absurd perhaps than it appears. "If the tiniest little tiff comes up between the partners of the Front Populaire, the Count, without so much as a wink from anyone, gets busy and mobilizes his fascists—and lo! the honeymoon returns to shine benignly on the coalition of left parties. It's a useful and *unpaid* servant like this man that Salengro has the cheek to want to suppress!" In fairness to the government it must be admitted that to abolish De la Rocque and his rivals would merely result in uniting the half-dozen factions under the banner of Doriot.

The Communists deserve a chapter all to themselves. Only a few weeks ago the Front Populaire parties and groups took the motto: "Whoever attacks the Communists strikes at the Front Populaire." But now that the leagues and reactionary groups, in the classic fascist manner, are concentrating their fire on "the hordes of Stalin," scarcely anyone seems disposed to defend them. What has happened? A number of things—first of all, in chronological order, the Spanish civil war. The Communist meetings were critical of French neutrality, and *Humanité* was outspoken. For a time Jouhaux and the C. G. T. and some of the left papers, like the *Lumière,* shared the Communists' attitude. Then Blum called in his friends and laid his cards on the table. Everybody else quieted down; the Communists did not. Unkind persons said the Communists cared more about their propaganda than about the Front Populaire or the peace of Europe. Then came devaluation. During the campaign even the Socialists had said, "Neither deflation nor devaluation," and the posters and orators of the right are not letting them forget it now. The Communists—to save their faces, say their foes—after voting the measure, called meetings of their followers to explain that they had given their approval not to the cheapening of the franc but to the Front Populaire. Finally, it is pretty generally agreed that they have done themselves as well as the government much damage by insisting, despite the pleas of the Cabinet, on holding meetings in such touchy provinces as Alsace and Lorraine —even after their big meeting at the Parc des Princes had obliged the authorities to mobilize 20,000 men to prevent disorder.

Meanwhile the country is showing signs of recovery. In a month or two it is quite possible that the good effects of devaluation may make themselves felt with sufficient strength to save the credit of Blum and the Front Populaire.



Drawings by Bert Hayden

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Mrs. Simpson and Palace Politics

BY AN ENGLISH EDITOR

By Cable from London

AN ENGLISH journalist is the last person competent to comment on the rumored royal marriage. In the first place, the surrounding events, so widely and intimately described in the American press, are completely unknown here. Mrs. Simpson is not a distinguished or even a well-known figure in England. A close student of the court circular and the traditional press releases from the palace might have learned that among the untitled persons who now crowd around the King there might sometimes be found Ernest Simpson and rather more frequently his wife. During the royal cruise photographs appeared of the King accompanied by, among other ladies, Mrs. Simpson. Beyond this there has been no indication in the English press that the King entertained any feelings toward Mrs. Simpson other than those of a host toward his guest.

The only thing which has so far given any basis for even the limited rumors circulating among the masses has been the failure of the press to handle the Simpson divorce. The palace gave the hint that publicity was considered undesirable. In any case the English press law on divorce prevents the reporting of any of those formal yet intimate details of adultery which must be strictly proved before the court will grant a dissolution of marriage. These factors had a curious effect on the reporting of the actual divorce itself. For example, the Conservative *Daily Telegraph* sent two reporters to Ipswich but only gave the divorce a paragraph. On the other hand, the Liberal *News Chronicle,* though saying nothing about the King, spun out the meager details permitted by law into a big center-page story. Thus those readers of the *News Chronicle* who had never heard of Mrs. Simpson were puzzled that she should receive such publicity, while those who had heard about her had only done so in relation to the King and were therefore even more mystified that her principal claim to fame was passed over. Thus the result of palace interference in this as in other cases was directly opposite from that intended, and rumors are now much more frequent; but outside London they have still only a very limited circulation.

Politically the most important factor in the situation for the moment is that most people in England know nothing of the King's friendship with Mrs. Simpson or of the possibility of their marriage. In the restricted circles where something is known two distinct rumors are afloat: first, that Mrs. Simpson will be raised to the peerage at the expiration of six months when the divorce becomes absolute and will then marry the King. True, for a long time there has been talk of the King cementing the bonds of empire by marrying a colonial; but Mrs. Simpson, though a Canadian through marriage to Mr. Simpson, is hardly the type of bride the empire politicians had in mind, and the King's marriage to her would without doubt produce a far-reaching constitutional crisis. Some indication of the strength of this rumor is afforded by the city quoting a special but high rate—eight guineas per cent—on a postponement of the coronation for causes other than the King's illness, the death of a member of the royal family, or war, which but for the Simpson affair would cover all contingencies. This, coupled with a rise to 26 per cent on the insurance rate against the King's marriage, shows that the city contemplates marriage, accompanied possibly by abdication, but it shows little else. Lloyds is notoriously credulous. The second rumor in well-informed circles is that the King does not intend marrying Mrs. Simpson and that his feelings toward her are not of that nature. He regards her, say some palace observers, as an interesting companion and a most valued adviser but nothing more. There is yet no information available to show which, if either, rumor is correct, but the chances against the King marrying Mrs. Simpson are much higher than is indicated by the city rates.

Politically in England the affair is not a major issue. The *Daily Worker,* which published a special number ridiculing and attacking the marriage of Prince George, has not yet mentioned it. Indeed, the affair at present appears only to play an important but subsidiary part in the underground political battle going on in the palace. Under King George there was a definite palace clique composed mainly of the older, duller, more respectable peers. Typical of this class were Lords Derby and Salisbury. Derby, whose principal claim to fame was that without participating in the war himself he persuaded millions of others to enlist with his Derby recruiting scheme, is fat, sporting, and correct, unlike Lord Lonsdale, who is only fat and sporting. Salisbury is a dry, lanky second-rater, an invariable office-holder in Conservative administrations, distinguished only as the sponsor of innumerable still-born bills to increase the power of the Lords. Both Derby, through his son in the government, and Salisbury, as head of the Cecil family, are closely connected with the Conservative Party. Supported partly by two archbishops and the Queen, they have taken the lead discreetly in rallying the aristocracy against the new pleasure-seeking palace set, inadequately restrained by Sir John Aird, who is the virtual head of the palace household. They aim to compel the King, whose political rather than social instability they fear, to conform to those traditions of bourgeois domesticity established by George V, which the Jubilee and the royal funeral showed to be capable of almost unlimited exploitation by the National government. In this struggle to make the King a good Conservative, Mrs. Simpson serves merely as an unimportant peg on which to hang rumor.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

IRVING DILLIARD of the editorial staff of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* brings out in the November *Harper's* an extremely interesting fact about the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court on minimum-wage statutes. In going over the decisions of the court in the three leading cases he says that he "made an astonishing discovery: that while the Supreme Court killed minimum-wage statutes in 1936 and 1923 and divided evenly on the issue in 1917, actually a majority of the justices participating in these three cases declared that such legislation was constitutional!" His analysis of this paradox shows that ten judges—Hughes, Stone, Cardozo, Holmes, Brandeis, Taft, Clark, Day, Pitney, and Sanford—favored minimum-wage legislation, while Van Devanter, McReynolds, Sutherland, Butler, White, McKenna, and Roberts voted against it. That the decisions were opposed to minimum-wage laws—in one case tied—was therefore due to the accidental composition of the court at the time the decisions were filed. The conservative judges seem to have been longer-lived than the others! Justice Hughes, when Governor of New York, once said: "We are under a Constitution, but the Constitution is what the judges say it is." Mr. Dilliard thinks that an unjust use has been made of these words of Governor Hughes. None the less he poses this question: "If someone is bold enough to suggest that, with respect to minimum-wage legislation, the Constitution is rather what the judges who stay on the bench *longest* say it is, who can contradict him?"

Mr. Dilliard also points out that if the deaths and resignations of justices and the appointment of new members since the District of Columbia case had been such as to establish a court including Hughes, Taft, Holmes, Brandeis, Stone, Cardozo, and Sanford, the New York law pronounced unconstitutional this year would have been upheld by at least seven to two. All of which brings out how accidental are the decisions of the court; how the sacred Constitution is preserved to us often because death does or does not stay his hand. It is a lottery the outcome of which is affected by a number of factors, including the personal predilections and point of view of the man who happens to be President. That this is the case has come as a great shock to many Americans who have been brought up to believe that the court is a magnificent, sterilized institution whose members divest themselves of all prejudices and economic beliefs on taking their seats and then pass upon legislation with sole reference to the basic law of the land.

Since Mr. Dilliard's article was written, this question of minimum-wage legislation has again presented itself to the Supreme Court. At its first meeting of the new term it declined to grant a rehearing in the New York case but did agree to hear a case which involves a similar statute in the state of Washington. In Illinois and other states deep concern is felt over the unfavorable decision, and it looks as if the issue would continue to confront the court until it is decided aright. How and when that will take place is obviously guesswork, but the situation brings up again the question whether the Supreme Court should have the right to nullify social and labor legislation. It was one of the disappointments of the Presidential campaign just ended that there was no real discussion or debate of this vital problem.

Soon after Mr. Roosevelt's denunciation of the decisions of the Supreme Court as putting us back into the horse-and-buggy age I offered to bet (with no takers) that the President would not again refer to the Supreme Court or the issue involved until he was safely reelected—or defeated. That proved to be the case, and speculation is therefore rife as to whether he will bring forward in his second term this question of the Supreme Court—whether that body has not exceeded its functions in dealing with social and economic issues, and/or whether it should be deprived of its present power. If the President chooses to lead in that direction we shall have another tremendous debate in and out of Congress, perhaps the most vital constitutional debate in our history, with the country clearly divided between those who believe the Constitution to be sacrosanct and untouchable, and those who maintain that it must be modernized, that Congress must have that right to legislate on social and economic conditions which adheres to parliaments in all other great countries. Even in Czecho-Slovakia the new Constitutional Court may declare a law passed by the legislature to be unconstitutional only upon a motion by one of six public bodies, three of which are branches of the legislature itself.

That the problem is surrounded by great difficulties no one can deny who read Professor Charles A. Beard's article in *The Nation* of April 1 last. Ordinarily quick to take a position, Professor Beard could only urge: "It may be well for all parties to the constitutional dispute to wait a while." "Meanwhile," he said, "the search for and clarification of fundamental principles proceed." I for one feel that the policy of drift cannot continue indefinitely and that it is vital to the future of the Republic in this hour when it is menaced from left and right that the issue be clarified, and that the Congress receive the power to deal finally with social and economic issues, though the Supreme Court's right to annul legislation relating to civil rights and personal liberty should still be preserved. There is where we need a real bulwark, as the readiness of our legislatures to pass teachers' oath bills and anti-red and anti-syndicalism statutes clearly shows.

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BROUN'S PAGE

THIS is written before Election Day, but when it appears the result will have been decided and Roosevelt, Landon, or Norman Thomas will have been selected as the next President of the United States. Fortunately the problem I wish to discuss will remain of interest no matter which one of the three has been elected. I am thinking of the needs and necessities of labor for the next four years. If labor had been powerful enough in the year 1936 it might quite possibly have passed up all three men. Franklin, Alf, and Norman, all leave much to be desired from the point of view of organized labor.

Personally Mr. Thomas would probably do his best to cooperate, but he would be badly handicapped by some of the most influential factions in his own party. Dan Hoan has certainly not succeeded in making Milwaukee a workers' paradise. I am not suggesting at all that the agreeable Mr. Hoan could have set up a little Socialist oasis in the middle of a capitalistic country, but he cannot entirely escape the blame for the low estate of organized labor within his city. It would be unfair to call Hoan a red-baiter, but he is jittery for all that and looks under the bed at night. When the Communists announced in the last municipal election that they intended to indorse him, he went into a dither and issued a statement declaring that it was a dirty plot to discredit him and that he would not accept votes from the reds.

When the Newspaper Guild strike first broke in Milwaukee, it was mistakingly assumed that the guild leaders had fomented a conflict in the belief that a Socialist city would be the best of all towns in which to try conclusions with Hearst. A good many of us knew beforehand that Dan Hoan was just a little reactionary around the edges, and we were confirmed in that belief before the strike was a week old. Most of the labor leaders of Milwaukee are also members of the Socialist Party, and they are in addition vain and timid bureaucrats very much afraid of the name and fame of William Randolph Hearst. It was my function on several occasions to attempt to placate labor men who grew angry when the guild strike committee tried to cut the red tape in which they wrapped our efforts. I remember being very apologetic and pouring a great deal of oil on one Socialist in particular. He said that the guild had made many mistakes.

"The worst one you've made," he said, "is about your picket line. I've been reliably informed that Communists have been seen on your picket line. You'll have to change that or forfeit the support of labor in Milwaukee."

I had been kotowing so long that my forehead was sore but now I straightened up. After all, we had had as many as 4,000 pickets out on one or two occasions. We had asked all who wished us well and who were with us to join the ranks. And so I said, "That we won't do. We wouldn't want to and in any case we couldn't. The Newspaper Guild will not set up a board of examiners at the head of the picket line and establish a set economic or political test for marchers. Those who were with us are with us."

The rule remained like that. If this article finds Norman Thomas the President-elect, I trust that he will tend to curb red-baiting by the Wisconsin wing of his party. I trust he will cease to be irritated at the work which John L. Lewis did for Roosevelt and come out much more forcefully than he has done as yet in favor of industrial unionism.

But perhaps the successful candidate is not Norman Thomas but Alfred M. Landon. Naturally I will grant that labor would be worse off under a Republican than under a Socialist administration. Landon will not be much moved by verbal arguments. In spite of a few cover-up speeches toward the end, he ran rather defiantly as the enemy of organized labor and in particular the bitter foe of the industrial type of union. At the moment he would be pretty contemptuous of labor's power. In the event that Landon is now President-elect it will be necessary to push the organization of steel and motors as rapidly as possible. Labor, in order to save itself from a hostile Administration, will have to show its power on the picket line if it is to moderate in any way the unfriendliness of Landon.

But perhaps Franklin D. Roosevelt has won. Does that mean that labor has crossed over Jordan and reached the promised land? Don't be silly. Paul Ward said before the election that the only difference he could see between Landon and Roosevelt was that Landon would call out the troops against the strikers in the first week and Roosevelt would wait until the second. I do not think Mr. Ward should have spoken of such a colossal difference so casually. A good strike is won in the first week. But taking Ward's words rather more symbolically than literally, I think there is small question that Franklin D. Roosevelt's labor policy will be very much governed by labor's own strength.

Some of the blanket condemnation of the NRA is quite unfair. Codes conferred very considerable benefits on workers in those industries which were well organized and none at all where unions were weak or non-existent. Indeed, although I was one of the bitter critics of Mr. Roosevelt during the NRA days I think there were times when he had a right to say that his own indecision and vacillation in regard to certain codes were no greater than William Green's.

Labor's job and labor's obligation are perfectly plain no matter who sits in the White House. It must develop a large and aggressive organization. It must organize not only the mass-production industries but also the white-collar workers and the unemployed. And it must organize along industrial lines.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

OUR BEST-KNOWN WRITER

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

WHEN the eighteen volumes of James Boswell's private papers were recently brought to light, it became possible to know their subject more intimately than any other man who ever lived. Few persons were ever more interested in either themselves or others, and by comparison Pepys was almost reticent. Now the discovery and publication of the original manuscript from which the "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides" was rewritten* adds another and valuable item to the most richly documented of literary careers. Of it the prospectus says, "It will have the unique distinction of being the first edition, published 163 years after it was written, of a work that has been famous for generations"; and the description is justified.

Those who are familiar with the notebooks from which Boswell composed the "Life" of Johnson know how completely they dispose of Macaulay's libelous paradox by revealing that the "Life" is the best of biographies, not because its author was a fool, but because he had a superb sense of character which gave him an almost unrivaled skill in turning a phrase or pointing an anecdote to make it more "Johnsonian" than it actually was. Here the interest is somewhat different, since in many ways the original draft is better than the finished work for the very reason that it is less formal, considerably fuller—about half again as long—and a good deal more frank. For publication Boswell eliminated many picturesque details which he replaced by generalities, discarded bits which might be too offensive to living persons or which revealed his "revered sage" in all-too-human aspects, and permitted Edward Malone to help him revise the often easy colloquial style into formal eighteenth-century prose. Here, however, we have about three-fourths of the work as it was written—part of it actually on the tour—and the version to which Johnson himself gave the praise Boswell so proudly records.

Unless I have overlooked something, there is not, to be sure, much that is factually of great importance, but there is much that makes the whole thing more vivid and more intimate,which gives us a realer sense of actually accompanying the strange expedition. If one is to go with the incomparable pair it is better to know that at Elgin they got "good fish, but beef collops and mutton chops which absolutely could not be eat" than merely that "we fared but ill at our inn here" as the published text has it; and if we are interested in the sage it is better that we shall have all of him even when he is calling a Scotch clergyman "the most ignorant booby and grossest bastard." There is a curious passage, later eliminated, in which Boswell very candidly analyzes the prudent limits of his Jacobite sympathies and several in which his own far from priggish sense of what was below his own or the Doctor's dignity triumphed over his desire to tell all. Usually he was willing to expose himself to any degree necessary for the proper exhibition of his hero, but though he left in part of Johnson's remarkable speculations concerning the manner in which he would manage his harem if he had one, he excised the part which dealt with Boswell's own qualification for eunuch in that establishment. Usually, also, he thought any extravagances of the Doctor were sufficiently excused when he himself had introduced suitable remarks about the solemn thoughts inspired by the spectacle of so majestic a pachyderm at play, but apparently Johnson's reflections on the proper limits of comfort in the furnishings of outhouses and his remarks upon the psychological state induced by necessary sojourns in them were thought to transcend all limits.

As a specimen of formal eighteenth-century prose the traditional version of the "Journal" will of course have to stand, but both as a travel book and as a source of information about the inexhaustibly interesting Johnson and the almost equally interesting Boswell this new edition is the one which everyone will want to use. It is a delight, and it can hardly fail to raise again the old question how a man so obstreperously wrong-headed as we are bound to think Dr. Johnson usually was can not only remain a source of endless delight but inspire profound admiration and affection. Not all his picturesqueness nor all Boswell's skill in setting it off is sufficient to account for the facts, and we are driven to reaffirm that at the bottom of what we admire is a greatness of intellect which no amount of disagreement with his conclusions can hide from us. He had to the highest possible degree one quality characteristic of all the great eighteenth-century intellectuals—a remarkable mastery of the rather limited knowledge and almost equally limited interests which were theirs. Perhaps for the very reason that their materials were relatively few and their scope relatively narrow they learned to handle what they did handle with unparalleled felicity.

Consider, for example, a passage of Toryism from the "Journal" which is not likely to strike a sympathetic cord in anyone today. Boswell has asked if the House of Peers should have as great an influence as it has.

> Johnson: "Yes, sir. Influence must ever be in proportion to property, and it is right it should." Boswell: "But is there not reason to fear that the common people may be oppressed?" Johnson: "No, sir. Our great fear is

*"Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D." Now First Published from the Original Manuscript with Preface and Notes by Frederic A. Pottle and Charles H. Bennett. The Viking Press. Limited Edition, $25. Trade Edition, $5.

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from want of power in government. Such a storm of vulgar force has broken in." Boswell: "It has only roared." Johnson: "Sir, it has roared till the judges in Westminster Hall have been afraid to pronounce sentence in opposition to the popular cry. You are frightened by what is no longer dangerous, like Presbyterians of Popery." He then repeated a passage, I think from Butler's "Remains," which ends, "and would cry 'Fire! Fire!' in Noah's flood."

Whatever accessory reasons there may be, the chief reason for the interest of that passage is that it is so extraordinarily well argued, and that a superb example of method is not only interesting but useful quite aside from the material to which it happens to be applied. Turned to another purpose, the reference to Presbyterians and Popery and the witticism about crying "Fire" in the midst of Noah's flood would make a better retort than any which has yet been given to, for example, the alarms sounded by the Liberty League over precisely the dangers which do not threaten us.

BOOKS

"Not Mine, but Man's"

MORE POEMS. By A. E. Housman. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

HOUSMAN is dead; he who without wit or metaphysics saw death clearly has undergone it. In his will he stated that his brother Lawrence might print such poems as he thought good. We have, therefore, in this book forty-eight more poems which are worthy of the poet, though some have not quite the simple, dramatic perfection of those Housman himself printed. His own funeral poem and many others now belong, as Housman does, to the world; they are the product of one of the finest "minor" poetic talents in English literature. Housman's request to his brother to destroy his notebooks on poetic ideas and his workshop material results in a terrible loss to all students of poetry. Notes on a craft as perfect as Housman's would have been invaluable. We are left with only one example, printed in this book, of two versions of a poem, but this single example indicates how Housman rid himself of the characteristic romanticism and personal emotionalism common to the other poets of his period.

Housman, it must be remembered, knew the impact of modern despair as early as 1895, the year of his greatest poetic output. This is the period of decadent romanticism during which Dowson wrote of passion as a drug to stimulate and to kill, Kipling and Henley hymned physical activity as reason for living, and many poets turned Catholic. Thirty years before our modern poets announced the death of an era, Housman wrote of it. While Yeats wrapped himself in the cloak of Irish myth and legend, Housman faced reality and found it tragic. He was of his own times in that he focused on individual tragedy but of our times in his bitterness against injustice, his hatred of war and empire. And he alone of the poets of his era depersonalized his philosophy and emotions so that they, and his poems, became "not mine, but man's."

To speak of these new poems of Housman's is to speak of his poetry in general. Most of them date with "Shropshire Lad" and the "Last Poems." Housman presents the modern knight, common man, fighting his last battle against too much self-knowledge, fighting with his "sword that will not save," pride and courage. His form is an adaptation of ballad and bucolic lyric, medieval and classical forms shaped to the simple, impersonal lyric which gives the essence of a story and an emotion. In words of one syllable Housman asserts the paradox of life—that the human will is immediately negated by a man's taking thought. The closing lines of poem after poem illustrate this. Here are two examples from his recent book:

> The head that I shall dream of
> That will not dream of me
>
> Thy creature that thou madest
> And wilt cast forth no more

Such dramatic reversals as conclude Housman's poems—"our eyes are in the places where we shall never be"—indicate this poet's irrevocable belief that man's own sense of time and death must deny him—once youth and its illusions of physical delight are past—any reason for living save the will to endure.

There are, as Kenneth Burke once remarked, nuclei of emotions and ideas fused in any poet's writing and from these a poet's characteristic images and symbols emerge. The finer the poet the fewer, most probably, his essential responses, for in the fine poet emotions and ideas form clusters which determine a point of view or a philosophy. Housman illustrates this perfectly. His visual scene is Shropshire, its moor and mountain, town and steeple, barn and stack, a background simple and universal enough to be named and not elaborately described, a country small enough to seem typical of any provincial setting wherein man takes thought concerning his own life and the life of others. His fundamental belief is that man's own awareness of decay and death is tragic. It follows therefore that youth, less aware, is alone happy, that suicide is justifiable if willed, that love may momentarily blind one to an inevitable defeat in life. And Housman's symbols—youth in sport, youth in love, the soldier in the fight of life, the mature man thinking about time and its harvest—all emerge from his philosophy. But because Housman's poetry is rather more classic than romantic, his scene and his essential drama and its characteristics are presented simply and universally, in inevitably correct and direct statement, so that his poetry—even when the first person pronoun is used—seems impersonal and applicable to every man. This is why every clear and perfect line of his, every poem with its dramatic close, is remembered.

EDA LOU WALTON

The Triumph of the Traders

CALEB CATLUM'S AMERICA. Edited with an Introduction by Vincent McHugh. Illustrated by Georg T. Hartmann. Stackpole Sons. $2.50.

MR. McHUGH claims that he was visited one day by a long lean American with red hair and blue eyes, and that before this fellow went away he told the stories which Mr. McHugh sets down here as the stories of Caleb Catlum. "He looked like a young man, and one who had been young a long time." He even "looked young enough to be his own grandson." But "there was about him the air and habit of another age of Americans." In a word, he was timeless. So Mr. McHugh finds Caleb an excellent vehicle for his own opinions and emotions concerning the American past, not to speak of the American future. Caleb will not, I suspect, make his mark as one of our folk heroes, nor does Mr. McHugh offer him as such. He is admittedly synthetic—a dash of Daniel

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Boone, a whiff of Mike Fink, a whoop of Paul Bunyan, a touch of Mark Twain, a suggestion of Samuel Adams, a suspicion of Jefferson, an aroma of Whitman and Lincoln. He has known all these persons and dozens of others in their class; or if he has not known them his pop and his grandpop have, and every older Catlum back to Eric the Red.

They indeed *are* Catlums—all the good guys of American history are—and the most that Mr. McHugh wants to do is to make a list of the good guys; in other words, to write American history in something like a folk language, with grammar by Mencken and poetry by God. Since the Catlums are immortal and move easily through time and space, and since Mr. McHugh is no respecter of periods, his history comes at us in a high sort of jumble; which shakes down finally into two lists of names, one a white list of Catlums and one a black list of persons for whom Caleb can find no better name than Traders. Whitman's name for them was hogs. They like war and money, they do not like liquor, and they have never learned how to make love.

Mr. McHugh's allegiance is to the unsymmetrical Americans: to the independent and the original ones, the ones with flavor, the cussed, cantankerous, cockeyed ones, the ones who would rather spend money than make it, and who like best of all to give it away; to the engineers of our destiny who build bridges only to burn them behind them; to the straight shooters who talk a little crookedly out of the corners of their mouths because that is the nature of their lingo. They are not highbrows, and neither are they primitives; they are run-of-the-mill Americans, probably Scotch-Irish—though John Henry is one of them, and John Henry is as black as iron. At any rate they do not number among themselves such notables as Hamilton, Hoover, and Rutherford B. Hayes. They are always something of a disturbance in the state; they like fights even if they see no sense in war, they never balance the budget, and their talk is loud in the land. Their lingo, as I have said, is neither academic nor aboriginal; a condition which Mr. McHugh very economically expresses by having his Indians talk like Harvard men, or worse yet like bally Englishmen. There is the Lakota chief, for instance, who has changed his name from Sleeping Water to Charing Cross and who chirps like this: " 'Frightfully awkward, what? I mean, dash it all, one *ought* to have ponies, don't you know? If you chaps will just set your kit down, I'll have my people fetch it in for you. *Travois,*' he says, giving a little wave. 'All that sort of thing.' " No, the Catlums talk plain American. "Way I figure it," says Caleb to Uncas, "you got to observe the customs o' the country. . . . I guess I'll take my lingo 'long with me an' just let 'er grow up with the country." Along, that is to say, with Huck Finn, Buffalo Bill, Casey Jones, Davy Crockett, and Johnny Appleseed.

The Traders, of course, we have always with us. One of them was here in the beginning, like original sin, and Mr. McHugh sometimes yields to despair when he notes how their numbers increase. Franklin was one of them, but that was not so bad because Franklin had compensating charms. Latterly the Traders have not been charming; they speculate, they dicker, they budgetize, they withhold relief from the poor, they view with alarm; they are for all the world what good Democrats accuse good Republicans of being. It is not without significance that Mr. McHugh in his preface acknowledges a debt to Parrington's "Main Currents of American Thought." Parrington was Jeffersonian and agrarian, and so as a matter of fact is Caleb, who discovers a cave in the West and follows it down to a wonderful land of golden farms and lazy sunshine—the agrarian's paradise. He comes out of the cave and has many further adventures; runs into more Catlums and identifies more

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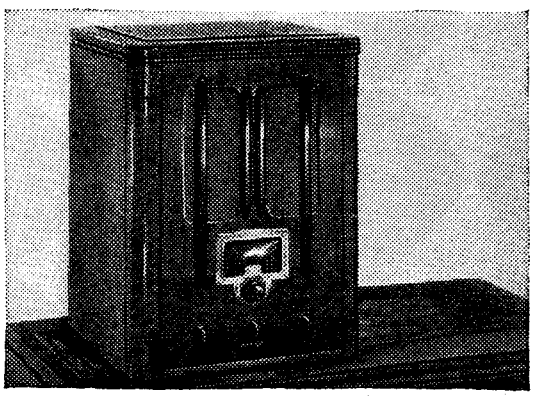

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piccolo-players (that is, by reference to a current anecdote which I had better not repeat, Traders). But in the end, exiled with all his tribe from a country which has gone completely Trader, he leads the mournful procession of those he loves back into the cave. And there Mr. McHugh leaves him.

It was a mistake to do so. A few Catlums at least should have been left among us to toughen under opposition and to skylark down the years. They are in essence a minority breed, thriving in unpopular places and difficult to kill. It is sentimental of Mr. McHugh to save them all of a sudden by hiding them in a hole where they must cease to be themselves, and where it is to be feared they will learn the odious virtue known in our days as prudence. It is also sentimental of Mr. McHugh to write as he does of Whitman and Lincoln, whom somehow he never manages to fit into his scheme. But those are minor blemishes in a joyful and powerful book whose heart is on the whole so definitely in the right place. MARK VAN DOREN

Girl of the Golden 90's

PORTRAIT OF AN ERA, AS DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON. By Fairfax Downey. Charles Scribner's Sons, $3.50.

ARTISTS are by no means exempt from the sour-grapes complex. How many times has the present reviewer spoken of the consummate skill of C. D. Gibson's pen drawings, only to be greeted with uplifted high brows and "Oh, *that* sort of thing!" As a matter of fact, in his mature work the grace, dash, and ease of Gibson's line, the presentation of what he saw fit to present, reveal a master in a chosen field. He was a virtuoso of the pen as Sargent was a virtuoso of the brush. To those who don't like his point of view and therefore denigrate his ability, the answer is "Go and try to do it."

His favorite subject matter, and his attitude toward it, is another story. It is quite possible that if all our artists had been Gibsons and all our producers Ziegfelds, the revolution had ere this been far around the corner—behind us! Gibson, for example, was unconsciously the perfect irritator of the masses. Court chronicler to the "Four Hundred," official historian of the pre-rayon era of metropolitan womanhood, a reversed Thorsten Veblen violently inspiring conspicuous consumption, he created the Gibson Girl.

His achievements as satirist, political cartoonist, war propagandist, and painter all sink to insignificance beside this feat. His Gibson Girl, delicately fed, marvelously clothed, idle, beautiful, insolent, destined to be a spoiled wife, sweeps haughtily and gracefully through his life edifice. Even more romantic than the romantic 90's, for her he became the apologist of courtship with "Love Conquers All" and "They Lived Happily Ever After." A glance at his life illumines his art.

He was "a child normally happy," sold his first drawing to *Life* in 1886, rose to "an income respected by mining magnates and railroad chieftains," and bought the magazine in 1918. Other periodicals clamored for work. In 1927 he received $100,000 for 100 drawings and later as high as $2,000 a drawing. Handsome, charming, internationally famous, happily married to a Southern belle, a social registerite, and rich in friends, he has had a congenial, busy, and pleasant life.

Aside from the Gibson Girl, the artist's greatest success was "The Education of Mr. Pipp." Here was real Americana. Archetype of "downtrodden consorts," the unlucky protagonist is "the composite of a thousand henpecked husbands." With two beautiful Gibsonized daughters, a social-climbing and domineering middle-aged harridan of a wife (lineal descendant of Louisa M. Alcott's "Little Women"), and no domestic will-power, this retired captain of industry exemplified that pathetic, ridiculous, and, in European eyes, contemptible creature, the American husband. Here was explained why our great business executives of the 90's clung to their offices until arteriosclerosis killed them, and here was suggested a definition of modern marriage—a respectable device by which man pays for love and woman gets paid for it.

None the less C. D. Gibson was primarily a romantic reporter of sentimental and amusing things, a one-man periodical —a *Punch* without politics, a *New Masses* without message. As an illustrator he would have been perfect for "The Prisoner of Zenda," medium for "Diana of the Crossways," terrible for "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and zero for "The Brothers Karamazov." His great creation was his Dream Girl, who was almost as well known in her day as Mickey Mouse is in ours.

His popularity was enormous, something like that of a later movie star such as Rudolf Valentino. "Along with the captains and the kings he extended his vast and beneficent sway," and, as Mark Sullivan points out, influenced "the manners of a whole generation of Americans." His imitators were, and are, legion.

Twice he renounced line drawing and took up painting. His contribution remains his work in black and white. It forms a veritable storehouse of authentic data on the costumes and etiquette of the American leisure class during a specified period. And if a supreme technical mastery of a certain problem be greatness, C. D. Gibson was, and is, a great man.

Mr. Downey's interesting book, of course copiously illustrated, is good but not great journalistic narrative.

CYRIL KAY-SCOTT

Parliamentary History

COMMONS DEBATES OF 1621. Edited by Wallace Notestein, Frances Helen Relf, and Hartley Simpson. Yale University Press. Seven Volumes. $35.

THAT this is the most distinguished piece of editing a record of Parliament has so far received is beyond all question. We are here given nine diaries of the Parliament of 1621 which together cover practically the whole of its proceedings. None of the diaries here produced was previously known. One, on good grounds, the editors feel able to assign to the great Pym; a second, if brief, is nevertheless the work of Wentworth; and a third is the work of that attractive figure John Smyth, who wrote the "Lives of the Berkeleys." The editing of the volumes is superb. Everything that the reader could require, down to a magnificent index, is here; and it should be added that the form of the volumes is worthy of their content. It is important to express one's humble gratitude to the scholars who are responsible for this achievement. They have thrown a flood of light upon a vital period of English history.

For they have enabled us to see the realities of the political scene at a moment when the accent of revolutionary change is beginning somberly to be heard. What is vital in these pages is the picture of ordinary members of Parliament, soberly, vigorously, and with determination, indicting the government of the day for its economic maladministration. They are acting after the collapse of a boom; and they are, clearly enough, shaping their thoughts to the transformation of the seat of power. The matters they discuss—taxation, companies, tariffs—are undramatic enough; but these reports have in them that depth of feeling, that apprehension of grim reality, that one finds in the debates of European parliaments when

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they survey the economic scene at the present time. In some degree, no doubt, their main value is to the specialist. though there are few pages in which there is not some incident or some phrase that is its own justification. Taken altogether their significance lies in their emphasis upon the economic background of the Stuart crisis. The struggle for parliamentary control was a struggle for a new form of social organization. These diaries make it possible to see how men's minds shaped themselves to that realization. There will be few histories of the English Parliament in the next generation in which these volumes will not have their part.

Their publication has been made possible by a grant from the Commonwealth Fund. Every scholar must note his gratitude to that foundation for the insight it displayed in making that grant. Work such as this is literally indispensable not merely to the historian but to students of politics and sociology. The diaries form, as it were, a moving-picture of a critical epoch, made by the men who shaped its destiny; and they are given to us with an *apparatus criticus* as exact, as delicate, and as graceful as that which it is traditional to lavish only upon a classical text. I know one other book of the kind only that compares with this in quality; it is Maitland's edition of the "Memoranda of 1306." Professor Notestein and his colleagues will desire no higher praise.

Perhaps I may add one word in conclusion. The debt of English history to American scholars is already a great one. Gross, Adams, Haskins, McIlwain, Read—the roll of distinction is an eminent one indeed. Nothing shows more splendidly the international character of scholarship than that enterprises of this magnitude and quality can be undertaken at an American university and financed by an American foundation. An Englishman is inclined to be humble as he looks at these massive volumes; their precision, their elegance, and their learning are the proof that American scholars have earned the right to stand with those of any other people in the forefront of the battle for knowledge. Professor Notestein writes gracefully of the hospitality he has received in English houses. When he returns friendships with so noble a gift, we should be churlish indeed if we denied him whatever he might choose to ask. And, at the least, he and his coadjutors will accept our thanks and gratitude.

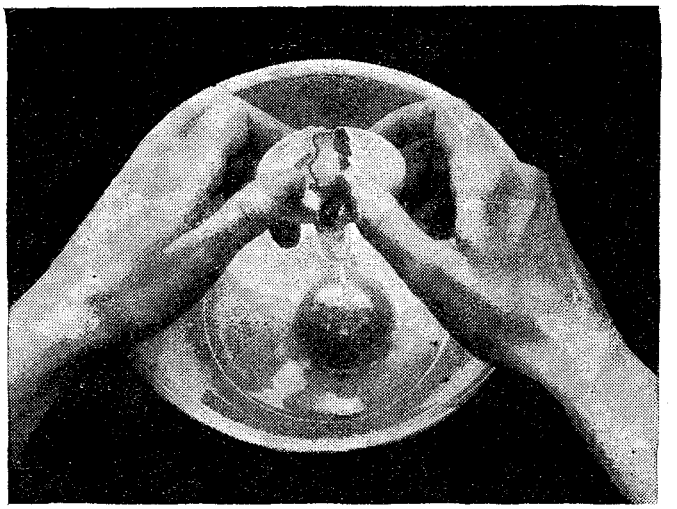
HAROLD J. LASKI

The Golem in Germany

THE WAR GOES ON. By Sholem Asch. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $3.

THE integrated setting of "The War Goes On" helps to give the book an even greater epic objectivity than the author achieved in "Three Cities." No other writer has depicted with such breadth of view and insight the suffering, the pathos, the chaos, and most of all the unmitigated brutality which during the period of inflation combined to spawn the present rulers of Germany. His magnificent pages are alive with the passionate anger of the proud Jew, but even more with the brooding, all-embracing sympathy of the great artist. And if Sholem Asch has in this novel failed to create characters as memorable as some of those in his earlier writings, he has made of it nevertheless a towering work of fiction.

The story deals with the effect of the inflation on the German people, when all values were tumbling precipitately, when the mark finally became "plain dirt," when prolonged hunger drove strong men to despair. The protagonists embrace nearly every type of Jew and German—the petty speculator and the all-powerful Stinnes, the Communist and the Nazi, the Junker,



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the degenerate, and the Bolshevik. There is, foremost, Aron Yudkewitch, the extraordinarily clever *Luftmensch* who rises from nothing to a place of power in the great Bodenheimer bank. All his fabulous wealth, however, which he loses in the end, is as ashes in his mouth because his bought wife despises him for his impotency and because his conscience never permits him to forget that his life is a fraud and a mockery.

Yet Yudkewitch is after all the interloper; more central to the main theme are the Bodenheimers, the Von Stickers, the Spinners, in whom the tragedy of Germany is concentrated. Max Bodenheimer, the head of a Jewish banking family, kills himself when the inflation makes it impossible for him to preserve the good name of the bank established by his grandfather and made powerful by his imperious father. His brother Heinrich, the selfish genius of the family, devotes his brilliant gifts to the cause of Nordic superiority until tragedy forces upon him the truth which he has all his life tried so eloquently to avoid. Adolf, the artist of the family, gives himself wholly to the enjoyment of painting—only to sacrifice his precious collection in order to feed "two living masterpieces." Hans, the only son of Max and his Christian wife, is the most pathetic and the best-drawn of the Bodenheimers. He was baptized when in his teens on the assumption that the sprinkle of holy water would save him from the ignominy of being a Jew. Yet he suffers most of all for his Jewishness. Nothing can compensate for his tainted blood—not his wealth, nor his Aryan appearance, nor his Christian baptism. These and other Jews are shown broken on the rack of blind, brutal hatred; a hatred giving power and prestige to "Death's Prophet," the "*Golem* set in motion by an inner mechanism . . . a machine created to give out vibrations of hatred, nothing else."

Of equal significance are the Junkers. When Robert von Sticker, a Goethe scholar completely impoverished by the inflation, learns that his daughter is in love with the son of his Jewish banker, he drives her out of the house with Junker ruthlessness; and when his money is about to give out he makes the proper arrangements for his funeral before sending a bullet through his brain. His son Wolfgang, brutalized by the war and the post-war years of shiftlessness, becomes a Nazi gangster and shoots his sister when she refuses to give up her unborn child. Only Lotte von Sticker has come through the years of suffering with a clear eye and open heart. When she meets Hans and falls in love with him, she does not hesitate to give herself to him. For this she is killed by her own brother. Finally, to fill out the picture, there is Albert Spinner, the worker and Social Democrat, whose acute undernourishment brings him to lend an ear to the Nazi promises of shared wealth and national greatness. All these Germans are uprooted, mad with hunger, suffering for their defeated country; all but Lotte are confused and brutalized and violently anti-Semitic. As they break away from the old order they hie themselves quickly to the groups of gangsters presided over by "Death's Prophet."

These characters are delineated with live sympathy. Yet the significance of the book lies not so much in their individual stories as in the tragedy of Germany which made their stories possible. For the central theme of the book is the epic pathos of a haughty people driven mad by defeat. Sholem Asch makes painfully clear the awful post-war conditions which forced the Germans to strike out with barbaric brutality against those weaker than they and to foster their delusions of grandeur at the expense of others. At the same time he mourns with his fellow-Jews and trains his energies upon the hatred of which they are the outraged victims. The epic objectivity of his approach makes the indictment all the more crushing.

CHARLES A. MADISON

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DRAMA

Too Good Not to Be Better

IT IS unfair, of course, but anyone as good as George S. Kaufman must pay the penalty for not being a great deal better. He has paid it before and he will have to pay it again in connection with "Stage Door" (Music Box Theater), which he has written in conjunction with Edna Ferber. Since the penalty generally includes an extremely profitable run, it is perhaps not too severe, and yet Mr. Kaufman must have heard "It's enormously amusing but—" too often not to entertain very melancholy convictions on the subject of human ingratitude. The scene is a boarding-house for aspiring young actresses somewhere in the fifties, and all of the play's very good best is strictly topical in nature. Underneath is a sentimental story and a familiar sentimental moral—that the real actor would rather starve in the theater than live in luxury anywhere else, even in Hollywood—but what really counts is the succession of what would have been called in the seventeenth century "the humours of a boarding-house."

It is true that even these may not be strictly new. One could easily guess beforehand that one was going to meet the girl who could play anything if she was given a chance, the girl who thinks that men are dreadful, and the girl who goes wrong in mink. But Mr. Kaufman and Miss Ferber have hit them off with such crisp, amusing strokes that they seem quite fresh, and the whole thing moves with such perfect ease in such a perfectly calculated tempo that one is carried irresistibly forward on a ripple of laughter. All the gags, whether expressed in words or embodied in "business," are as smart as a night club which won't open till tomorrow and as quotable as what the *New Yorker* will say next week. The proletarian playwright who goes Hollywood is "one of those fellows who start off on a soap box and end in a swimming pool"; the austere young lady who is sure "Kit Cornell isn't seen at parties" gets "Yeh, Bernhardt was a home girl, too" in reply; and the bit of business in which the irreverent flapper throws the peel of a banana she has been eating in front of the top-hatted proletarian renegade and then beckons him forward with a finger deserves to win a place in the standard repertory of gags. "It's tremendously amusing but—."

The real reason that it is impossible to enjoy one of Mr. Kaufman's shows without feeling a certain undercurrent of resentment is, I think, that the lines are not only much better than the play itself but also actually upon a much higher level of intelligence. At its best his wit is pretty nearly everything which wit ought to be. It is smart and sophisticated and crisp; it is also based upon shrewd insight and a keen sense of sham even in its most modish embodiments. Why is it that the plays themselves must be fundamentally incompatible with the spirit of their dialogue, that they must be based upon hokum of the very sort which the man who writes them was born to expose? How merry he himself could make with the thesis he is preaching and with the more sentimental of the scenes through which he develops it! Or could he? Perhaps, after all, the answer is that his intelligence and his power of criticism exhaust themselves in a phrase, that the part of him which speaks in epigrams cannot make any whole of itself.

The WPA theatrical unit has staked much on "It Can't Happen Here," produced at the Adelphi Theater in New York and simultaneously in various other cities. As a play it is unfor-

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tunately not much more than so-so: it is reasonably well acted but rather pedestrian on the whole and rather obvious in its working out. There is no novelty in maintaining that Mr. Lewis's books are convincing largely because of the wealth of their accessory detail, but when the novel has been stripped as bare as in this dramatic version it is, one has lost the very quality which made the whole thing seem real. It is too bad also that the scene in which the radio priest and the potential dictator get together before the microphone should be broadly burlesqued, for the whole effect of the play depends upon its seeming plainly factual, and with such elements of burlesque present there is no possibility that it shall. Is the story a solemn warning or is it a *reductio ad absurdum* whose title is to be taken literally? At the dramatic version one can't be sure.

"Ten Million Ghosts" (St. James Theater) is Sidney Kingsley's intellectually oversimplified pageant of the munitions industry. Whatever Kingsley's faults, he has shown himself so skilful a writer of speakable dialogue in "Dead End" and "Men in White" that it is difficult to believe him responsible for the wooden and generally incredible talk which goes on in the new play. He has buried his talents not only under a storehouse full of scenery but also under a mass of data which overflows the play on to three pages of introduction in the program. The result is to put one in precisely the mood for "Swing Your Lady" (Booth Theater), a very rowdy tale of a dumb wrestler and his love for a female blacksmith, which the author of "Sailor Beware" has somewhat laboriously but hilariously concocted. Mr. Nicholson is a scholar and perhaps got his idea of an amorous wrestling match from Piron; but if I add that to me the funniest moment was the one when the wrestler stomps on the toes of an opponent, I shall have sufficiently indicated that the real merits of the piece are not literary.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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THE *Nation* ANNOUNCES . . .

A Symposium by Leading Progressives:

"What I Expect of the New Administration"

FILMS

Cooperative Cannery

"THE President's Mystery" (Republic Pictures) comes close enough on the heels of "Millions of Us" (Cameo) to induce the belief that a new species of American film is on its way, if indeed it has not already arrived. It is not strictly new, since Europe has long been familiar with it, but in this particular form it is new to us; and the interesting thing about the present examples, not to speak of last summer's "Fury," is the success with which they have adapted what has hitherto been a foreign idea to purely native materials. They are, without further preamble, propaganda pictures; or, if one prefers, films of social significance; or better yet, studies of contemporary public life. "Millions of Us" was moving to me not merely because it was a labor film with whose thesis I could agree, but even more because it was an American labor film, with an indubitably American boy dreaming of food in the alleys not of Moscow or Paris but of Los Angeles. And so with "The President's Mystery," which generates authentic excitement out of a story concerning, of all things, cooperative canneries.

Like its Russian progenitors it makes a very black villain out of the business man—in this case the president of National Canneries, an organization which of course is out to do the people. He is handsome, scheming, and cynical; in contrast to the hero (Henry Wilcoxon), who is handsome, honest, and easily converted to the cause of the cooperatives as soon as chance and a pretty girl bring him to see how much they mean to the very people whom as counsel for National Canneries he has been cheating. He renounces his former life, disappears completely from New York and Washington (that, incidentally, is the mystery), and slips into control of the Springdale Cooperative, which after a long fight with National Canneries he steers into solvency and saves for all time to come. I have purposely exaggerated the simplicity of the tale in order to make its origin evident and in order to suggest that the simplicity in question is proper. The purpose of the authors, Lester Cole and Nathaniel West, was to get something said; they chose a transparent rhetoric with which to say it; and they have said it with power. They took off, I understand, from a mystery story which President Roosevelt inspired several other authors to write last year for *Liberty;* but the direction in which they went, I am also given to understand, was quite their own. They undoubtedly benefited by having a detective story to carry their doctrine; but on the other hand it is to their credit that they saw the value of the vehicle and mixed their types so cleverly. And they have kept the American scene before our eyes.

A French film of the fortnight turned out to be disappointing. "Les Misérables" (Cinéma de Paris) has of course some great acting by Harry Baur, who plays three roles; but as a film it is intolerably slow. The American thing called "pace" is said not to be highly regarded in the European studios, and perhaps it is not the highest virtue a film can have; yet it seems to me a necessary one, and at any rate I can derive only moderate pleasure from a picture that dies dozens of deaths before its close. A few fine moments—and Harry Baur provides more than a few as Jean Valjean—are not in themselves enough.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Letters to the Editors

"The Used-Car Racket"

Dear Sirs: In your issue of October 19 you published an article, The Used Car Racket, by Elliott Arnold, which for misleading statements parallels much of your pro-Jewish propaganda.

Alluding to a bent frame, Mr. Arnold says: "The proper straightening of a bent frame is a long and costly job. The body of the car must be lifted off and the frame recast in its original mold." Automobile frames are not cast; they are fabricated out of sheet steel, and no mold is at any time used.

Confident in his supreme ignorance, Mr. Arnold continues with the egregious assertion that a slipping "dry clutch" can be "fixed" by inserting fuller's earth "through an oil hole in the transmission"—a manifest absurdity since a "dry clutch" is never located in the transmission case. He then asserts that king-pins, which are without exception made of hardened steel, can be hammered till they are "egg-shaped" and nicked with a chisel; that loose connecting rods are "reinforced," that metal will not take a second welding, that ether, irrespective of its cost, is mixed with gasoline. As an appropriate climax, he cites a case where a screwdriver blade was made to function as a piston!

How many of your readers swallow such "bilge" it would be interesting to learn. N. W. ROGERS

Tompkins Corners, N. Y., October 15

Dear Sirs: Mr. Rogers's letter, with its splendid tone of politeness and restraint, certainly merits a detailed answer. I'm happy to be able to provide one.

A frame is stamped in separate parts and then riveted together. When a frame is badly bent, to straighten it properly it is necessary to raise the body, and then use a stamp, or mold, of precisely the original shape and size.

I never said that a clutch is "located in the transmission case." A clutch, for Mr. Rogers's benefit, operates on the transmission. At the junction of the clutch and the transmission there is a small lubricating hole, or hand hole. On a dry clutch that is where the powder is inserted. Perhaps Mr. Rogers shifts his gears without using his clutch.

Certainly when king-pins are put into a new car they are of hardened steel. But when they need replacement, they need it only for one reason, because they are worn to a frazzle. And when they've reached that stage they can be flattened, egg-shaped, nicked, or tied into a bow.

When the connecting-rod bearings wear, their looseness can be easily muffled by means of the heavy compound I mentioned. The molasses-like substance acts as a heavy padding, reinforcing the rods for the purpose of fraudulent sale.

The trick of using ether in gasoline to increase power is so ancient I was almost ashamed to mention it.

And lastly, I never said the screwdriver blade "functioned as a piston." My words were: "In one case, where a piston was broken, the dealer put an ordinary screwdriver blade in its place; it worked long enough to sell the car." (Note, I said in *one* case.) What happened, of course, was that the screwdriver blade, wedged against the broken piston, acted as a stopple, and prevented oil from being pumped through the area.

It may act as a sop to Mr. Rogers's erudite indignation to know that five veteran mechanics scrutinized my article before I submitted it and admitted wryly that they all had used the tricks mentioned, except the screwdriver blade, one or more times. ELLIOTT ARNOLD

New York, October 20

The Spanish People's Front

Dear Sirs: Anita Brenner's attack upon our integrity in her review of "Spain in Revolt" *(The Nation,* October 17) exceeds the measure of common decency. Miss Brenner abhors the People's Front. We do not. For this reason she charges that we wrote this book "not to reveal, but to conceal." Our book, she writes, was "tailored" to fit the "party line" and "simple honesty has long since become a useless—indeed a dangerous—virtue" for people of our beliefs. Obviously, people may honestly differ on such questions as the People's Front without falling foul of Miss Brenner's irresponsible charges.

One sentence in her review is peculiarly revealing: "Messrs. Gannes and Repard do prove all this [feudal land relations, etc.], which is to say they assert it and then draw the desired conclusions." To define "prove" as does Miss Brenner may be more autobiographical than critical.

Miss Brenner is an extraordinary person to fling about such charges, considering her record. The subject of the People's Front rouses her to fury. In an article called Who's Who in Spain *(The Nation,* August 15) she called the People's Front a "political fiction" and applauded the position of the Nin-Maurin group because of its program "workers' front as against Popular Front." On September 27 last Andres Nin joined the People's Front government of Catalonia as Minister of Justice. In other words, Miss Brenner's private hero has joined a "political fiction." Inasmuch as the Anarcho-Syndicalists are in the new Catalan government, this "political fiction" is supported by every left group in Spain with the sole exception of the diehard Trotskyites who support Miss Brenner's position. It is disturbing to find *The Nation* giving persons of this mind and temper a virtual monopoly on books friendly to the People's Front movement. HARRY GANNES

THEODORE REPARD

Brooklyn, N. Y., October 16

Dear Sirs: I still charge Messrs. Gannes and Repard with sloppiness, ignorance, and bad faith. This is not a criticism of their politics. It is their workmanship and their ethics I don't like. In the very short space you allow me, I can list only the most flagrant examples of these shortcomings, for there is one on almost every page.

Sloppiness: All references to Angel Herrera, whose name is as familiar in Spain as Coughlin's here, and who is the brains of the Gil Robles crowd, are to "Angel Herrara." On page 206 the Basque province of Alava is put down as "Alvara." On page 211 the name of the Socialist Party is misspelled twice, and so on.

Ignorance: One major inaccuracy is the frequently made reference to the "feudal land relations" and to the "large landholding" of the church and religious orders. The conclusion drawn is that the Spanish revolution is not against capitalism but against feudalism—this is the cornerstone of the whole People's Front platform. History, however, says that the church lands of Spain were expropriated and sold over fifty years ago, at the time of the first republic. The biggest landowners of today made their fortunes

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mostly out of that bargain sale. The church is the biggest banker and industrial capitalist, and most of the other big fortunes, like March's and Cambo's, are likewise capitalist. These are the backers and financiers of the fascists. The struggle is clearly worker-capitalist, as Gannes-Repard will have to admit almost any day now, just as they will have to forget their enthusiasm for Azaña and company, who have machine-gunned the workers quite a lot of times and who knew for months of the fascist plot and did nothing at all to stop it or to prepare a decent defense.

Another major example of ignorance is the reference to the "backward peasantry," a concept imported from Czarist Russia or the Latin American countries and applied mechanically to Spain, even to the point of saying that the "poor peasantry and the unemployed" follow Gil Robles. The Spanish peasantry backward! Had the authors ever been in Spain for even a week, they could not have dreamed of saying such a thing. But why, at least, didn't they look at the photographs from the front?

Bad faith: (1) Anarchists are defined as people who "despised strikes for partial and immediate ends on the theory that workers . . . would be discouraged from fighting for fundamental change." (2) The Anarcho-Syndicalist C. N. T., which put up an epic fight against Primo de Rivera, isn't even mentioned in that connection. Instead, the authors say that Rivera met no militant labor opposition. (3) Pestaña, a right-wing reformist, as prominent in Spain as Woll in America, is put down as a leader of the Anarchist F. A. I. Similar distortions, but with more malice, occur every time the P. O. U. M. and its leaders are mentioned. For example, the authors date this party, which is three years old and now playing a very important revolutionary role, from 1936, and say it has greatly dwindled since the February elections. The Workers' Alliances launched by it in 1933, the most important event in Spanish labor history until this year, are credited to Maurin personally, who "started them in a vague way"; but on the next page the authors betray their confusion by saying that the Communist Party "later regretted having boycotted these alliances."

I say that any book that distorts, conceals. If the authors want to say they did so involuntarily, they then plead guilty merely to sloppiness and ignorance, which is their privilege. But that still does not make them historians worth trusting.

ANITA BRENNER

New York, October 18

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